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AUG 27 1917

September The 191

Black Cat

Clever Short Stories

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City Physicians Explain Why They Prescribe Nuxated Iron to Make Beautiful, Healthy Women and Strong, Vigorous Men

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Quickly transforms flabby flesh, toneless tissues, and pallid cheeks of weak, anaemic men and women into a perfect glow of health and beauty—Often increases the strength of delicate, nervous, run-down folks 100 per cent. in two weeks' time.

IT is conservatively estimated that over three million people annually in this country alone are taking Nuxated Iron. Such astonishing results have been reported from its use both by doctors and laymen, that a number of physicians in various parts of the country have been asked to explain why they prescribe it so extensively, and why it apparently produces so much better results than were obtained from the old forms of inorganic iron.

Extracts from some of the letters received are given below:

Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York Physician and Medical Author, says: "There can be no vigorous iron men without iron." Pallor means anæmia. Anæmia means iron deficiency. The skin of anæmic men and women is pale, the flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone; the brain fags and the memory fails and they often become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks.

In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, candies, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degerminated corn-meal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked, are responsible for another grave iron loss.

Therefore, if you wish to preserve your youthful vim and vigor to a ripe old age, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron, just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt.

Dr. E. Sauer, a Boston physician who has studied both in this country and in great European medical institutions, says: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If the people would only take Nuxated Iron when they feel weak or rundown, instead of dosing themselves with habit-forming drugs, stimulants and alcoholic beverages, I am convinced that in this way they could ward off disease, preventing it becoming organic in thousands of cases and thereby the lives of thousands might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, kidney, liver, heart trouble and other dangerous maladies. The real and true cause which started their disease was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood.

"Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with a blood pressure of a boy of twenty and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—Nuxated Iron had filled him with renewed life. At thirty he was in bad health; at forty-six he was care worn and nearly all in. Now, at fifty, after taking Nuxated Iron, a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth."

Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron.

Dr. Schuyler C. Jacques, Visiting Surgeon St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous, rundown conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in nuxated iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron, and increase their strength 100 per cent or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

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The Black Cat

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THE BLACK CAT CLUB

CRITICISING the stories in the June issue is a task which sinks almost to the level of a coroner's inquest according to one of our lady readers. Running her finger down the table of contents she says: "Here are six dead first pop, and three in the second story. Six nearly die in the third, or think they do, which is just as bad. Two are moribund in the fourth. Three are slaughtered in the fifth and one in the sixth. Forty-eight fall in *God's Half Acre*, and there is a "pool of blood" on page thirty-six. Three are murdered in the last tale. That makes sixty-four dead in forty-two pages. Why it's worse than Shakespeare."

It is bad, isn't it? Reminds us of the "Blood—blood—blood—blood—blood—blood—blood" song in "Miss Springtime" and of the days when we had a list of undertakers' telephone numbers pasted over our desk and we used to call each one at least twice in a morning and irreverently ask, "Anything new?" Perhaps being an obituary editor wasn't the best training in the world for magazine work. It certainly doesn't seem so when an editor can get out a "Bloody Number" and be totally unconscious of it. We apologize.

Frederick J. Jackson, author of the story *No Other Gods Before Me*, was the winner of the $25 prize in the June contest. The $5 prize winners were: Harriette Wilbur, Duluth, Minn.; A. W. Breeden, Calhoun, La.; W. K. Jones, Moravia, N. J.; Elliot Field, Cleveland, Ohio; G. Lombard Kelly, Ashville, N. C. Stories are criticised in the order of their standing in the contest

No Other Gods Before Me is a study of the psychological effect of the memory of early moral training on the mind of a desperado. It doesn't excel because of its plot, but in spite of it, for the plot is neither original nor striking. The general structure of the story is simple and suited to the theme, the suspense is well maintained, the various scenes are well visualized, and the style like the structure is simple and direct. While there is plenty of action the story lacks that swiftness and directness that is pre-eminent in one or two of the other stories. This drawing-out is necessary to a certain extent to properly develop the dominant character, who has reverence as a superstition, taking the place of morals and principles. It is a story strong enough to be recalled many times after it has been read and should rank high in any collection.

Mystery and suspense are the chief elements that hold the reader's interest in the story *Faith, Hope and Justice*. It is a type of story which cannot fail to hold interest inasmuch as it depends upon a small point which is kept from the reader until the end. The idea of the course of defense proceeding from the drug sign of Ingersoll & Payne is exceptionally clever, and the reference to the sign is an elusive clue to the outcome. Here the properties of sentimental self-abnegation and old college friendship are brought in, but the story would have lost nothing in dramatic possibilities if the accused had not been a college mate of his lawyer. The very facts of the prominence of both attorney and client, and both residents of the same place, were sufficient motives without introducing the element of "old time's sake." The story is technically good as it has one dominant character, one supreme incident and leaves a single impression. It is ingenious and concise and appeals to the intellect rather than to the emotions.

The Prod is a masterful example of the story that is grewsome without being offensive. The structure of the story is suited to the purpose and the author attains some distinction of style in the repetition of the main cinema, or motion picture of Charde crawling forward with the sled under the driving force of the "prod." The background, the general situation and the character of the one actor are brought out in spite of the briefness of the tale; and the suspense is perfect. The author knows the value of contrast and repression. The reader is pleased to find in the ending that sodden human nature has been retrieved by the throb of elemental love.

In *The Smile of Joss*, the author gives an insight into Oriental character that shows considerable analysis of the subject. The viewpoint throughout is that of Sam Wren's sympathetic creator, hovering about and within, interpreting Sam's every thought, mood and action, and so engrossed in the hero's welfare that nothing is allowed to creep in outside his intimate ken. Sam Wren is made very real; he acts, thinks, and feels as one would expect a Christianized Chinese to do in time of danger,—seek help of the gods he has abandoned, particularly as his danger was incurred in the service of the new religion. The inscrutability of the Oriental and the implacability of Tong hatred is well sketched. Out of thirty-two paragraphs, but three are dialogue, and the dramatic style employed in the direct narrative is the main reason for the unity and thoroughness of

(*Continued on page* 45)

TED AND THE SORRELS

BY G. B. BUCHANAN

Being a memorandum of certain events in the lives of two sorrels and a cow puncher, and having to do especially with the man's determination to ride one and his desire to serve the other.

BOYS," said Jim Cordon, boss of the Bar O, "there's going to be a little music today. We got to do something with the big sorrel."

The big sorrel eyed us curiously from behind the corral bars. He was fresh from the grass, a five-year-old, and as pretty a stallion as you ever saw. He was a monster in size, but he had superb action. As a cow horse he would himself be too big. As a sire for cow horses he had size and action and vitality that would be worth money to a breeder. We had been after him before in the roundups, but he had always eluded us. Now the ruse of a band of stallionless mares had tolled him into a corral skilfully hidden among the cotton woods along Hell Roaring Fork. Then had come as nasty a fight as twenty cow and horse men could put up, when we started to bring him up to home quarters. But we got him there—now he was to be broke.

"Your pretty clothes," Ted Cammack, the star buster of the outfit, remarked, "will be dirtied today, sorrel." Ted always did have a mean way of accenting things. It must have been his accent for, as he spoke, the big horse threw up his beautiful head and blared a mighty challenge. He pranced away a few steps and blared again.

"Ho-ho," sneered Ted. "Ready for it, eh? Well, you may be it—you may not—the hoss never yet got under his laigs that beat Ted Cammack. All right, boys, put his panties on him."

It was a long fight and a hard one, to put his saddle on the stallion—a fight which does not need to be described for the story has been told many times by abler pens than mine. And, anyway, our story concerns the *other* sorrel as much as this one. Suffice it to say that, in due time, the sorrel's slick, shiny coat was dirtied for sure; suffice it to say that Ted Cammack had the fight of his life—finally coming a cropper to the tune of four broken ribs, a broken leg and a broken arm. Even then the big horse wanted to stamp his life out as the buster lay swearing on the ground. The boss, himself, threw the rope which choked the horse away from Ted. Ted was laid up for weeks—during which the sorrel had his liberty prolonged, for if Ted Cammack couldn't ride him, none of the rest of us had any show at all.

Thus began the course of true hate. The big horse got friendly with most of us—so long as we let saddle stuff alone. But to Ted Cammack he never failed to show his teeth and blare his challenge and dance his hostile notions. Ted spent hours, recuperating, in cussing the stallion. "Well, some day, you old reprobate," he always ended, "I'll ride you." And the horse invariably blared back in a way which plainly showed his derision.

The horse was unusual in many ways, one of which, as I have said, was his evident good-humor with most of us. Many a stallion let run to that age, and who then beats out the buster, turns sour. Most others are a bit dull, but this horse had intelligence. We could see it in his fiery eyes as he followed us around the corral fence, he inside, proud, haughty; us outside, wishing he was broke, for the heart of a cowman, even though it quails at breaking it, never fails to respond to the lure of a beautiful horse.

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He followed us around the corral, and one day he learned the trick of opening the corral gate by watching us do it. Next morning we found him down in the house lot—that several section area of fenced land in which the work beasts and house cattle ranged. It ran down to Hell Roaring Fork; down at its lower end was included in another fence the Bar O graveyard.

It was a silent place and, as private graveyards go, much peopled. The old free days of the cow country found a high ratio of interments for its population, especially male, and, at that, the population was mostly male, so far as white folks go. I think it was old Colonel Fritter—who started the Bar O business—who did it; he was from Kentucky. But whoever it was, he sent back East for two pounds of Kentucky blue grass seed and strewed it upon the surface of the Bar O cemetery. It must have been the sheltered location down in Hell Roaring Fork valley. Blue grass usually doesn't take kindly to the State of Wyoming; but in the Bar O graveyard there was as pretty a growth as one could wish. Old Fritter is there now—I guess he thinks of that bit:

Under the sod and the dew—

Well, anyway, the big sorrel went down there and whiffed the blue grass. He tried the fence, but it was a good fence, so his belly hungered. There was a gate, but the horse didn't know how to work it.

One day Bill Toten, a cowman, met with a sudden and distressing accident. It concerned an unfortunately placed suspender button and a crooked poker game down in Mesa. Bill came home tied to a horse, while the dealer, who drew first, (thanks to Bill's unfortunate collision with his suspender button), hot-footed toward the rising sun. He got to Colorado about three meters ahead of Ted Cammack, for which he should have given thanks. Ted and Bill had been bosom friends.

"Poor Bill," said Ted; "that's what comes of associatin' with bad company. So long as Bill lead a upright, moral life, and held up his pants with a respectable belt, he never had no accidents—he did to the other guy before he done to him. But now he gets enamored of a pair of red-white-and-blue gallusses such as faro dealers, saloon-keepers and card sharps wear, and first thing he knows he's bored. Well, we go to give Bill a fun*eral.*"

So Ted went into the corral and roped up his own beast and Bill's. The sorrel watched the outfit leave; Ted Cammack riding and leading Bill's horse with his saddle empty. The horse saw the boys come out of the bunkhouse with a long, queer-looking box. It was rough, perhaps, but it was better than many. The boss followed with a bible, and strung out behind, marched the rest of the outfit. The sorrel followed the cortege, keeping pace and acting very quiet. Maybe, or maybe not, he understood.

"Yeh, you big brute," Ted soliloquized, "we're goin' buryin'. White folks does better with their relics than hosses. We plants ours in the State of Wyoming,—they don't litter up like your kyote funerals."

The grave was already dug. We put the coffin in. The boss read some bible, and the rest of us said what we knew of the Lord's Prayer.

The sorrel had come with us as far as the gate; he stood outside while we did our duties, then, when we came out of the enclosure, he watched us seriously. He followed us back to the ranch house quite as gravely as before.

Next morning he was gone. Ted Cammack, passing the graveyard on his way to the range, spied a horrifying desecration. The horse was in the graveyard, having copied our way of opening the gate. Not only had he devoured the blue grass, but at that moment his glistening body reclined upon Bill's new-made grave. As Ted rode up, the sorrel ducked his head and rolled in ecstacy in the fresh-dug soil.

"Believe me," said Ted mournfully, to the bunkhouse, "it busted my heart. Bill, my best friend, he lyin' there asleep—dead—not able to defend hisself, and that nag—my worst enemy—wollerin' on him. You heard me shootin'? Yeh, I druv that horse outa there pronto."

Ted could never get over it,—his best friend being wallowed on by his worst enemy.

There was some shenanigan with a cattle shipment pulled off down in Cheyenne, shortly after Bill's sad removal from our midst. The boss rode down to see about it. He came back sober. It was suspicious. Taken with what followed, it was sufficient to convince us that dire machinations were afoot. The week after the Cheyenne trip the boss went down to Mesa to see the District Attorney—something about Bill's demise, he said. He didn't come back for two days. His pony was cold blowed; the boss was cold sober. Now a cow horse doesn't go cold blowed coming from Mesa, which is barely fifteen miles; nor did the boss's legal consultations usually end so aridly.

The next week it was Mesa again—to see about some fence wire—yet we hadn't dickered a mouthful with old man Davis, who monopolized the only post timber on Hell Roaring Fork.

"We got to herd ride the boss from now on," said the bunkhouse. In an unobtrusive, but no less effective way, two cowmen followed on the trip to discuss fence wire.

"Fence wire," they scorned, returning. "Yeh, he goes to Cheyenne. You guessed it—it's a female."

"Poor old Jim! Well, we done our duty the best we could. Who is it? Is it anybody we know, or some designin' hussy that spots Jim's gold-plated saddle?"

"No, we don't know her. At that, though, she maybe is designin'—all females is. The outstandin' feature of her psychology is her hair,—sorrel as the big hoss. Stand 'em side by side and you couldn't tell which was hoss and which female hair."

"Which," mused Ted Cammack, "is plenty. There's good sorrels. Well, all I gotta say is she better not waller on Bill."

"Huh!" retorted the cook. "It wasn't so much Bill gettin' wallered on as Mr. Cammack. Did I dream it or did it happen—laig, arm, ribs?"

"Well, Ted needn't worry none. She couldn't bust none o' Ted's bone. She ain't much more'n a hundred and ten, maybe fifteen. She's what that foreign feller called *muttum in parvenue,* or much in nothing."

"It's them little females that does the worst to a big bum," Ted said gloomily.

"Yeh; they bust's things most. Maybe she can't bust Ted's laig, but I mind a show down to Codyville—there's a little much-in-nothin' like this here one, that pulverizes a guy's heart. He's a big feller, too—maybe fifty pounds more of him than Ted."

"Huh!"

"What's the dame's game, anyhow?" asked another. "Is she a biscuit shooter, or does she faro, or is she one of these here painted deserts?"

"She ain't none of them; it might be better if she was. The boss might come to his senses then. She's the most dangerous maverick on the range—a decent, honest, good-lookin', intelligent young woman. Her game is trained nursin'."

"The boss is done, amen!"

"Yeh. Y'know that hosp'l joint there in Cheyenne, which maybe is run most for itinerent invalids, there not bein' much cause for lengthy illnesses among our native populace—well, the boss goes up there to see his cattle feller, he bein' took sudden with a 'tack of somethin'—maybe buck ager—when he hears the boss is ridin' the trail to see about that shenanigan. Well, little Much-in-nothin' is herd ridin' this cattle feller, and that's where the boss sees her first.

"But how she come to be in Cheyenne first is like this: She comes from back East somewheres, herd ridin' a lunger gent. She herd rides him private, but to be near medical comfort, they lives at the hosp'l. I hears this lunger gent is pretty much a sport. He pays his bills prompt for a while, then he slows up. But he's got lotsa references and talks of his rich relatives back East, so they don't push. He up and dies. Then they find he's not only a four-flusher and ain't got no relatives at all, but he's likewise in debt to every drinkin' and gamblin' hell in town. Well, he's in debt to the nurse, too, for her salary, so she's broke likewise.

"Well, the hosp'l never hears of this charity stuff, I guess, so they fasten on poor Much-in-nothin' for her board, if they can't get none of the gent's. Course the contract was with the four-flusher that died, but they threaten to blacklist the girl with the hosp'ls back East, so she's working there in the hosp'ls for twenty bucks a month to pay off her board bill to the hosp'l."

"Ain't it tough? But I guess a rich rancher like the boss would come in handy for little Much-in-nothin'."

The boss made frequent journeys down Mesa way. He traveled to other parts also, even over to Dingley's, where old Sim Born lived, who had sworn to perforate the boss pronto on sight.

He was getting so he didn't look us in the face any more, knowing he hadn't told us a true word about his journeyings since Bill died. Then one day he came back—this time from up Nogale way—dead drunk. We knew it was done—one way or the other. We didn't know which way the hands lay, but we knew the game was closed.

"Well, boys," Jim said, when he had cooled out, "I got—I guess maybe I got a little surprise for you all. What're you laughin' at?"

"Surprise nothin'," we yelled. We knew then she had said "Yes."

"When's it going to be pulled off?"

"What?"

"The nupchuls."

The boss looked at us silent a while. "Who told you?" he said.

"You did. Yeh. Any one-time straightforward party, who gets so he can't look his own cowmen in the face when he tells them his hoss went cold blowed comin' from Mesa, better look out. You big liar, we been herd ridin' you ever since you sprung that fence wire fib!"

The boss scratched his head and blinked. "Shucks," he said. "Well, what do you think of her?" he went on, hopefully. "Ain't she just one little peach, though?"

"I seen better."

"There don't no good sorrels grow."

"Them much-in-nothin's make me sick."

The boss pulled his gun. "Any guy wantin' to keep Bill company just second them remarks—or make others. She's the sweetest, best, dearest, kindest, whitest dame in the world, and don't you forget it."

We all laughed and let out some gun play. "When's the nupchuls? Is they public?"

"You bet! The whole state o' Wyoming is invited. The boss o' the Bar O knows how to get married. It's next week, on Tuesday, the stunt is; the nupchuls lasts all week."

Well, we married them good and proper. Even the big sorrel put in his hand, dancing around the corral as proud as a peacock, while all the cowmen and boss ranchers found time to call him pretty names. A couple of daring ones tried their legs over him—with sudden and sufficient results. And, like the tiding bearers said, the new missus was so like him in hair that there was no other name for her than "the other sorrel." She seemed a bit shy—who wouldn't, dumped from the quiet seclusion of the East and hospitals into the queen of the Bar O? She tried not to show it, though every every time the boys used their guns she went white. Of course there wasn't much family life during the nuptial week. After that—well, the old Bar O changed!

It didn't matter to the boys, though, if they got Hail Columbia when they moved the State of Wyoming into the State of Happiness. We went meekly to the door to spit; we didn't target our guns at the ceiling beams any more. But there was pleasure just the same in the Bar O's old kitchen. She even revolutionized the bunkhouse. The things we hadn't known about hygiene were awful! "It's a wonder," the cook said, "that there's any cowmen livin', livin' so unhygenick as we done."

"But you'll do as I say?"

"Oh, sure." And, darn us! we did!

So, like I said, things changed. The men changed. She didn't like fire-water. The boys cut it out—some—only of course lifetime habits don't die so easy—for another man's wife. They didn't even die in the boss for his own. Still, she wasn't

always hypercritical. It wasn't long, therefore, before the boys were all more or less in love with her—and Ted Cammack was hit hardest. Which only shows how contrary human nature is. He'd even have let her wallow on Bill, and his legs, arms and ribs weren't in the scheme of things any more.

And, as things naturally came about, she was thrown much into the boys' company. The boss of a big ranch has lots to see to; he hadn't time for fancy play. I guess when he was courting,—I guess every man does,—he thought that when they married he'd never leave her; he'd always be her company and she his, but you know how it is. Getting married means responsibilities. He's got to look ahead to make more money. Well, he's got to attend to business even if it does mean leaving the wife alone more than he had intended.

"Now Sugar-plum," the boss would say, "the whole ranch is yours,—make yourself at home; ride, fish, hunt; have a good time." Then he busts off to the range, or to town, or God knows where, and don't show up again till night. He tells the wife to ride—never thinking she don't know how. Riding's second nature to the boss—maybe second nature to Wyoming girls; but the missus was from back East. Honest she'd never set a horse in her life, except a rocker horse. He told her to fish—Hell Roaring Fork was full of the biggest kind of trout. The girl had fished some, with a bent pin and sitting beside a puddle. Well, Hell Roaring Fork was no place for a tenderfoot angler alone. He told her to hunt—never thinking she'd never fired a gun.

Now, I don't mean to criticise the boss—maybe no man is to be criticised so soon in the married game. He didn't intend it, only of course ignorance isn't much of an excuse. If he'd have been back East and told her to enjoy herself by going down and buying out Burdick's millinery shop, she'd have known what to do, and how to do it, and wouldn't have needed to run to Jim, Sam or Tom for teaching. He told her to ride and hunt and fish. It's only natural that she got somebody to teach her. Now the buster of a cow outfit works like hell when he does work, but he don't work often. So, as the cards fell, Ted Cammack taught the other sorrel the things she didn't know.

Now I don't know—probably no one other than the woman herself ever does know what she marries a man for, and lots of times she don't know either—what the girl married the boss for. It wasn't any cinch—that job in the hospital. I guess the boss offered a way out. Now understand, I'm only supposing. The boss is a handsome guy; he's got a good property, and lots of the girls were stuck on him.

But there was something terribly fascinating about Ted Cammack. He was quiet, and slim and hard and brave. Yes, the boy was no coward—no more than a quiet, slim, hard blade of steel. And, find them where you will, the man whose courage and heart is true is gentle with women. So, like I said, being with him so much, seeing his courage and gentleness, and the honest love no man can hide from his eyes, the missus forgot sometimes that Ted was not the boss. One day the explosion came.

It wasn't the boss; for he was miles away. It came from Ted and the girl themselves. 'Twas the sorrel started it. He'd been in the graveyard again. Then he was put in the house corral and left sulking. The girl was acquainted with the sorrel—it seems birds of a feather flock together. The big horse let her pat him and pull his mane and kiss his nose. Yes! It was sickening how that brute took to her! Well, Ted and the missus had been riding. They came in and Ted turned out the horses. The girl saw the sorrel and called him to the fence. He came to her, obedient as a lamb, and held out his head for her to pat and kiss. Then Ted came up. The horse bared his teeth.

"What you see in this beast beats me," Ted said.

"Oh, he's so beautiful. How big he is! What a wonderful head! And his hair—don't you just love to run your hand over it?"

"I love to run my heel with a good twelve-point spur over it," Ted retorted

grimly. "Why, this beast is my worst enemy; or," he corrected, "he was."

"Why, I love him!"

So Ted told her all about it; beginning at the broken leg, arm and ribs, and ending with the desecration of Bill's last resting-place. "And," he concluded, "the beast hates me just as much as I hate him. Watch." Ted reached out his hand. The sorrel bit at it; he blared; he pranced around. Ted watched him, sneering. "But," he went on, "some day I'll ride him,—that's all I'm living for now,—to ride this nag."

The girl looked curiously at Ted out of the corner of her eye. I wonder do women have senses we don't? "I wonder," she went on briskly, "if he ever will be tamed—broke I guess is your word—his spirit. Look at his eyes,—how they flash. Look at his neck,—how proud he is!"

"Yeh," Ted admitted, softly. "It'll be a man's job—to break him. But other things just as hard has been done. Did you reckon I'm a guy to get broke easy either—my spirit? I'll ride him just the same. Frankly, I don't think he ever will be lady broke—he went too long—but some day he'll be rid—by me. I'm studying him, and believe me, it'll be some ride. Won't it, enemy?"

The stallion blared.

"I'm beginning to like riding," the girl said presently. "I'm beginning to like Wyoming, too. I didn't at first; it was so different."

"Yeh. I reckon it must have been. Like me once. I got in a Wild West Show to ride broncs. They had a bunch of spavined, broke-down cavalry plugs that bucked like grandmother's rockin' chair. Say, it was the biggest bunk I ever see. It was back East. I'd signed to ride them nags all one summer. The boobs et it up—but homesick! Gee, I know just how you felt. And that dirty four-flusher that got you in bad with the hosp'l! But I'm glad you're beginnin' to like it. The boss is a fair-to-middlin' guy; he'll do right by you."

"Oh," the girl said, slowly, "it wasn't Jim—it was—the rest of you."

Ted looked away across the range. He was a gentleman, like I said. He knew the girl was Jim's. "Well," he said simply, after a time, "the time has come. We got to cut it out. Like I said, the hoss was my worst enemy. The boss is him now. He beat me to it; and if he hadn't, I'd have had no show; he had the ranch and I nothin'. But I'm a fair-to-middlin' guy myself. I know how to play the game. I've lost. So, like I said, I can't ride, nor fish, nor hunt with you no more."

For a moment Ted Cammack and the other sorrel looked into each other's souls. But she knew how to play the game too. Then: "Well, if you think best, Ted; but"—again the glimpse into each other's hearts—"I've enjoyed it. You've helped me over a hard place—over a valley of despair deeper than you know—to a summit of—peace."

"Thank you, ma'am. Like I said, the boss is a fair-to-middlin' guy. Don't blame him too much; he didn't think."

"I don't blame him—now. I understand. And I hope you gain—suppose we call it *your* summit of peace—although I can't imagine anything *more* unpeaceful," she laughed, a little sadly, and motioned toward the sorrel's glistening back.

"Thank you; I will—some day."

So they parted. There are thoroughbred people as well as nags.

"Huh," said Ted to himself. "I guess the only summit of peace Ted Cammack'll ever know is a summit like that damned sorrel wollered off'n Bill."

The year ran on into winter,—into spring. The snow melted; the rains came. The coulees and Hell Roaring Fork got monstrous. The State of Wyoming was one hell for sure.

The other sorrel wasn't around much now, but we studiously observed her hygenic orders. In fact, the Bar O was expectant. One night we were all seated in the bunkhouse when the boss came in, white as a Hereford's face.

"My God, boys," he gasped, "she's dyin'!"

"The missus?"

"Yeh. The colt;—things is goin' bad. She sabes such things, hosp'l, y'know. She

says she might pull out if she had a medicine man—maybe she'll last till midnight—after that—her strength—an' there ain't no medicine man this side o' Mesa, fifteen mile, and tother side o' Hell Roaring Fork and dark and rainin'. Oh, Lord Jesus, have mercy on us!"

"Well," said Ted, dully, "we got to get a medicine man, then!"

"My God, how? If it was light—if there was time to make a boat—but it's got to be done tonight or never; my little sweetheart—"

"Ride fer a doctor," suggested one of the fool boys.

"Ride! You fool you; no hoss'd live in the coulees, let alone Hell Roaring Fork, and carry double home!"

Then up spoke Ted, quiet, his eyes gleaming in the yellowish light from the lamps. "There's one hoss, and only one, on the range, that's got a chance—the sorrel."

"The sorrel—maybe. But who'll ride him?"

"And," went on Ted, "there's one man, and only one, on the range, that can ride him—me."

"Thank you, Ted, but it'd be murder—"

"Well, that hoss'd be murdered a dozen times for the other sorrel—so'd I."

"Oh!"

It wasn't what the boss said, it was the inflection—the lift in his eyebrows. It was as plain as if he'd said, "Yes, I seen you two fussing around together."

Quick as a flash Ted's gun jumped. "Take it back," he snarled.

The boss wasn't a coward. He'd have stood and fought it out—and died—without turning a hair. He just saw that in the excitement he had done wrong. "I didn't mean it," he said, honestly, "and if you can, Ted—"

"A'right. You checkacoes put his panties on the sorrel, pronto!"

It wasn't that he swung his gun on us that started us out so quick; we just got the thought that the State of Happiness would miss the other sorrel a whole lot, but the State of Wyoming wouldn't care a cent if she was brought out there to the blue grass—even in a store coffin.

We messed in the corral maybe a quarter hour,—it's fast saddling for the stallion,—but we brought him up to the gate, as solidly bridled and saddled as good leather will do it. Ted was standing there at the gate, staring at the lighted window in the upstairs the boss had built when she came;—there in the room where the other sorrel was fighting, fighting—

The horse was kicking and snarling to beat blazes. Ted turned and reached out his hand. "Sorrel," he said, quiet like, "it ain't in Ted Cammack to ask no favors of man nor hoss, for himself. You love me—not; as for me, the quicker you go to hell the better. But there's bigger things in this world than our hate; one is being did tonight. I'm askin' a favor then, from you—it ain't for myself—it's for her—the other sorrel."

The horse had changed a bit. The wickedness was leaving his eyes. He was looking up at the lighted window, his ears pricked forward. He looked like he was listening—listening—

"She's dyin'," Ted went on. "She's gotta have a medicine man. He's gotta be got from Mesa, fifteen mile, an' over the coulees and Hell Roaring Fork, and dark as pitch. Hoss, there's only one hoss on the range that's got a show—and he ain't got many. An' we only got a coupla hours—then—well, hoss, it's you and Ted Cammack or the blue grass'll be dug again—for the other sorrel."

You can take your choice as to whether the sorrel understood that the girl needed him, or that this man would master him by his will.

"Well," Ted went on grimly, drawing his gun and tapping it against the brute's big head, "by Eternity, I'm going to ride you there and back, with the medicine man, if I have to braid every ounce of meat off'n your bones; and if you pull the monkey business I'll blow out your brains when we get back."

In an instant Ted had vaulted into the saddle and shot away into the darkness. We could hear the big beast pounding down the rail, sodden, splashing steadily, the swish of Ted's quirt urging him on; and in the window the light burned palely.

It was one hundred and ten minutes by the clock when they got back. The other sorrel lived. The colt died—so that, after all, the blue grass was dug, but, though the State of Happiness lost a precious thing, it did not lose its queen.

"Ride," said Ted, noncommittally, "yeh; she was a bird. Wouldn't have missed her for nothin', nothin'." The medicine man gave us more details. According to him the sorrel was a cross between a cyclone and a rocking-chair—no more jar than the latter, no more regard for a person's nerves or where he was going than the former. He admitted a slight hesitation at Hell Roaring Fork, but the urgency of the case—neither he nor Ted Cammack ever said it, but the involuntary glance the medicine man gave Ted's gun gave us a hint—urged him on. He was glad he came—wonderful experience—glad to help—any time. Wonderful hoss—wonderful! The sorrel turned his back when the gentleman tried to pat him.

The queer part of it was that though the horse hadn't as many marks as one might expect, if anything the mutual animosity between them became increasingly greater as long as Ted stayed on the Bar O. One sometimes glimpsed a certain courtesy in their hostilities, however, as of one gentleman to another whom he has found worthy of his steel.

Ted didn't stay long though. He drifted off. Then came word that he was dead. The boys were scandalized at his carelessness. Ted had picked a quarrel over in Cross Corners and his gun was empty. He lived long enough to ask them to plant him under the blue grass where the sorrels could wallow on him, but of course the Cross Cornerites didn't understand, and when we heard of it it was too late. But Ted was not forgotten on the Bar O. He's got monuments there. Between forty-nine and ninety-four of the sorrel's progeny, and one of the other sorrel's, are named "Ted."

And sometimes you can see both of the sorrels looking dreamily across the range.

NEXT month: *ANN* by *Fannie Dunagan*, the story of a widow's marriage to her husband's slayer, of the other man who went to jail, and of the doings of two innocent bystanders.

THE DEATH MASK

BY LADD PLUMLEY

An artist, whose hobby is the collection of death masks, comes into the possession of the death mask of a murderer in which he finds an almost perfect likeness of his own features.

THE theory was a horrible one; the doctor had heard something concerning it.

"Take nature everywhere!" the artist exclaimed. "In a clover field you find a freak, but if you search you will find its duplicate. It's so with men." He pointed to the wall where on a black hanging were many plaster casts of faces. "You don't like my death masks?"

"No. Death masks are dead men's faces."

"They aren't pleasant, but they tell the truth. At the moment of death faces don't lie. But that's not why I've collected masks. Look at the two at the end!"

"More gruesome than the others."

"There's a reason. Violent death doesn't make pretty faces. A and B, let us call them. B was a cobbler. He got the American hunch and hit for the States. A fellow on shipboard was too attentive to the cobbler's wife. The cobbler met him on a New York street and stuck a knife into him. After the execution the authorities allowed a mask to be taken."

The doctor shuddered. "They look like duplicates."

"They are alike. And who was A? He was one of Napoleon's officers. He suspected his wife of infidelity. He ran the suspected man through with his sword. He was executed. The celebrated Doctor Antommarchi took the mask. It did not come to me by accident, as did the cobbler's. I recognized the resemblance and bought it."

"A coincidence," argued the doctor. "I hate your beastly theory."

"The similarity could not have been a coincidence. Think of the mathematical probability that two men with exactly the same facial makeup should both commit the same crime!"

"Their deaths weren't alike. The soldier was shot."

"He was not. He committed suicide with a rope in his cell."

"But the cobbler was electrocuted."

"No—hanged. It was before the days of electricity."

"The personal application of your horrible theory?"

The artist unsteadily rose. He pulled open the drawer of a cabinet and selected a mask from the black hanging. He placed before the doctor the mask, and a portrait cut from a newspaper. The he stepped back. "Look at the mask and look at me," he said.

The doctor glanced at the plaster and then at his patient. "There is a resemblance. How did you come by this unpleasant thing?"

"Picked it up over at Ricco's place for a still life study—death study, rather. That was five years ago. Then I discovered the amazing resemblance to my own face. Suppose you read the legend on the back."

The memorandum was brief. The doctor scowled as he read. "I understand," he said. "So this is the basis for those hints of your devilish theory? This murderer poisoned his sweetheart. So you—Bosh! And only a fancied resemblance!"

"You haven't looked at the picture," put in the shaking voice of the artist. "I sent for an account of the murder and cut the picture from a London newspaper."

The doctor attempted not to show how startled he was. He could hardly be-

lieve that the picture in his hand was not that of the artist. "There is a resemblance," he said. Abruptly he rose and pulled out his watch. "Another patient," he snapped. "Young man, chuck death masks, fancied resemblances to murderers, and all your damned tommyrot. It's to be a breakaway from the girl, from masks, from everything!"

"My prize picture!" Driscome gasped, but he was not thinking of his picture.

"Your brain is worth more than any prize. Put everything behind you. That is the only thing which will save you. I speak as an expert. Pack your duds and away! Understand? You've got to do it. Run like the very devil from this den, from the picture, from the girl; run like the very devil from everything which is putting you into a padded cell."

"That's not so easy," gritted out the artist. "If I could—"

"There's no 'if.' You must—must! You'll see me again before long. May drop in any time. Shall expect to find you packed."

Left by himself, Driscome sat a long time gazing at the masks. "By heavens, I'll try to do it!" at length he exclaimed. "I'll lock up the damned ranch! I'll go—it doesn't matter where I go."

Hastily he packed a small trunk. He had heard a friend say that the color scheme in Prince Edward Island was most unusual. He had the vaguest idea where Prince Edward Island was, but he knew that it was somewhere in Canada. As he had decided to make a getaway, he also decided that a remote place would be best.

Driscome had met a model in the studio of a friend. For a prize picture he had need of a face of just that kind. For six months the girl had sat for him. Long before the six months were over he knew that the girl was to him far more than a model. She was an East Side girl, with a Russian tailor as a father, but she had been educated in a New York public school. Driscome called at her home; it was with a kind of loathing that he had passed a portion of an evening in the tenement. But the girl was beautiful, and before long he cared nothing for her antecedents and the East Side family. His passion blotted out everything but the girl. He had proposed marriage and had been accepted.

Driscome came of patrician New England stock. Almost immediately had begun differences between the Russian girl and himself. Soon the differences brought the kind of quarrels which, under such circumstances, can be expected. Then, after a few weeks, the girl began to have hours of utter indifference. At such times she would tell Driscome that she had never seriously thought of marriage. There were hours when Driscome knew himself to be an infatuated fool, and with all his power attempted to put the girl from his mind. But his picture was not finished, and she came daily to his studio. Daily there was either a resumption of the courtship or days when the girl evidently wanted nothing but her pay for her hours as a model.

The picture should have been finished sooner, but the artist knew that its completion would end his meetings with the model, and he delayed the finishing touches. When she was away he found it impossible to think of his work. He would lounge indolently in his studio, thinking of her and wishing that he could make her different from what she was. The hours before her coming were filled with hopes that her mood would be what it sometimes was. This had been his condition for many weeks.

Now that he had decided to get away, his mind became more at rest. He summoned a taxi by 'phone. He called up the janitor and asked him to assist with his luggage. He wrote to his club, saying that all letters were to be held until he should send for them. These things completed, he waited for the taxi, and as he waited he became conscious that he was doing exactly as had the man of the death mask. He, too, had made his preparations. He had summoned a hack to take him to a railroad station—he had stated this in his confession. But there the analogy ceased. At the last moment he had summoned his sweetheart for a

final meeting. The artist felt sure that he would be guilty of no such weakness.

The cab was announced. As Driscome stood outside the door of his studio, waiting for the janitor to carry down the trunk, he was actually light-hearted. He had sidetracked his infatuation; he had put behind him the most morbid hours he had ever known; he had given the lie to the horrible theory which his morbidness had formulated. He decided that he would go farther. He would leave nothing behind him to remind him upon his return of the months of insanity. He would destroy the mask and the picture.

With this in mind he returned to his studio. He snapped on the lights and pulled the drapery from the painted face. He seized a palette knife and lifted it, but as he hesitated—for the face had not lost its enchantment—he heard steps out in the corridor. Before she entered he knew that she was coming. She ran into the studio, laughing. As long as he lived he could never forget the laughing bronze eyes. "Your trunk is in the hall—you are running away!"

"Yes."

"For how long?"

"It cannot matter."

"If you weren't so horrid sometimes, it might matter. Maybe I'll change my mind. *Maybe*—I'm made that way. It's always maybe with me."

"What do you mean?"

"I thought it would be a victory—to tell you. The picture is almost finished. Maybe I'll go away, too. I wanted to say goodbye. Those were nice days—some of them; weren't they?"

"Heavens—***nice!***"

"Well, they were. And I just couldn't go without seeing you again. But you aren't the same. You look—you frighten me! Please—come here!"

She had thrown herself into a chair near the door. Hardly knowing what he did, Driscome stepped to her side. Hating himself, he leaned over her and put his lips to hers. She threw her arms around his neck. "Poor, poor boy!" she exclaimed. But in a flash her mood changed. "That's what I wanted," she said. "I'd hate to feel that you really didn't care for me. And you haven't asked me where I may go. It's a man in Chicago. He says he's never seen a face like mine. I met him in Mr. Rappelyea's studio."

"Not Dentley?"

"Yes, that's his name."

"It can't be that you are actually thinking of an engagement with that brute?"

"I've promised him. The pay is even better than you've been paying me. But—I'm never sure of myself. Sometimes I wish that I were different."

She threw up her arms, and pulling Driscome's head down, kissed him again and again.

He threw himself from her, panting.

"Has anybody told you what particular kind of a devil that man is?" he asked.

The girl laughed; soft low laughter, but laughter that had soft brutality in it. "You are so terribly serious! That's why we don't hit it off as we might. As I said, tonight you look as if you could kill me. I'm afraid of you. Please—please come here again."

Once more, against his wishes, and like an automaton in her power, Driscome stepped to her side, and her heavy soft lips met his. Her bronze eyes were very compelling, as they held his own. "We are so different!" she exclaimed petulantly. "And—yes—I think I will go with that 'devil' as you call him. Then—perhaps I won't. The pay is big—and besides—"

The artist did not know how it came about, but he found himself on his knees before her, with his arms around her, and kissing her frantically. His eyes were wet and his heart was pounding. He urged her to marry him that night.

She pushed him from her. "That's over!" she exclaimed, and her voice had changed with her mood. She said that she was tired of everything. She was sick of living with her folks on the East Side, but she had no desire for marriage. She wanted to know every bit there was of life. As for Driscome, if she had known how he would act, she would not have come. She ended by working herself

into one of the fits of hysteria which Driscome knew so well, and asked him to get her something to drink, some wine, if wine could be had, or some whiskey, if he had whiskey.

Staggering to his feet, Driscome stepped behind a portiere, where in a cabinet he kept his whiskey. He turned on the electric light and opened the cabinet, muttering to himself. If he could have known it, no madman was less responsible for his actions. His brain on fire and his hand shaking, he groped amid the bottles.

Suddenly his breath stopped, as his throat contracted so that he could hardly breathe. The bottle he held in his hand had a skull and cross-bones on it, and under the sign of death was the name of a poison. The doctor had given him this sleeping draft, warning him of the power of the drug, if more than a few drops were used.

The frenzied weeks had led to their climax. Tumultuous thoughts half formed in his throbbing brain and then dissolved. There was nothing real. He seemed to hear a voice far within his brain which told him that should she die it were far better than that she should live to be deserted by the creature who desired her.

"Are you going to take forever to get me something?" came the girl's voice. "There must be whiskey. You always have whiskey."

"There is whiskey, and I'm getting you some," replied Driscome, and he wondered at the naturalness of his voice.

With a quick motion he poured out a fatal portion from the bottle. He reached for another bottle and mingled the whiskey. Then came the thought that he must not leave the poison where it could be found. At his side was a basin and a faucet. He turned on the water and emptied the bottle. Near the basin was a window, which, as it was warm in his rooms, had been left open. He knew that on this side of the building was a vacant lot and broken bottles. He flung out the bottle and heard the tinkle of breaking glass.

"I'm getting you whiskey and some cool water," he said, and again he wondered that his voice seemed his own. He also wondered at the fact that the stress of emotion he had been under for the last half-hour had left him. With the two glasses he stepped to the other side of the portiere. With a smile which showed her pretty teeth, she took the glass.

"Most girls mix water," she laughed. "But I like it straight. That's the way I am—I want the full strength of everything. Here's to you! May your next—what shall I call her? But may she be more satisfactory. And I drink to Mr. Dentley. He won't take a picture prize—but you can't deny that he has his points!"

Driscome fathomed the golden haze of her eyes. "Don't drink to me," he groaned. "Don't drink to my love ventures. I've had my last. By all means drink to Dentley—and damn you both!"

The girl had placed the glass to her lips. She lowered her hand. "What a brute you are!" she exclaimed. "Well, here's to you and—to him!" But once more she lowered the glass without drinking.

"Do you know," she said, contracting her eyes to narrow slits, "if I thought you had the nerve to do it, I would think that you had mixed something with this whiskey."

"Good!" gasped Driscome, but laughing afterward with a heartiness which amazed him. "You think I'm poisoning you. There would be reasons. But—hand it to me—I'll drink it myself."

The girl pushed the glass toward him. "Yes, that would be a way out. He had not thought of that before. The other hadn't done that; perhaps his nerve had failed him. With a sudden resolution, Driscome lifted his hand.

"You've proved that it's all right," laughed the girl. She added, "I said that only to see what you'd do. Men of your kind don't poison girls." Once more she raised the glass. As she placed it to her lips it was as if, on the wall opposite, Driscome saw his crime portrayed. In that second he beheld himself a man who had been mastered by love for the beauty

of a face and not the love of a heart and soul. In that second he came to know her as she was. And he saw himself degraded to a believer in absurd rubbish. He knew himself as the most beastly thing a man can be—a murderer of women. No thought of punishment came. The thought which mastered everything was that he had sunk to depths he could never have believed possible. As if his soul was that of another and could be read like a printed page, this was presented to him. And in that second he even had time to wonder if all murderers were granted this clear vision at the moment of their crime.

He leaped forward. Not understanding what he was attempting, the girl stepped back. Then her eyes gained from his a knowledge of what he had done. They gleamed with desperate fear. "You did intend to kill me!" she cried.

He did not hear her. He seized the glass and crashed it upon the floor. "You vampire!" he shouted. "Love! Love for you brought me lower than the other brute who desires you. Go—before I do kill you!"

She stumbled toward the door, but she was not quick enough to suit him. With a grip which left a mark for weeks, he seized her arm. He pushed her through the doorway, crashing the door shut and turning the key. While she raced down the stairs, he turned to the portrait. Tearing the canvass from its easel, he threw it upon the floor and stamped upon it. Not content, he slashed it with a dirk which he took from the wall. Then he pulled down the black hanging, the death masks crashing upon the floor. He ground them under his feet, crunching them to powder. As he continued to stamp upon the broken plaster, there came a repeated ringing of the door bell.

"Let me in!" shouted the doctor.

With a suddenness which surprised him, Driscome realized that the studio had ceased spinning around and that the fires in his brain were cooling. On a table was a package of cigarettes. Steadying himself against the table, he lighted one, after which he managed, dizzily, to reach the door and open it. Then he dropped into a chair.

The doctor carefully placed his hat and gloves on the table. He turned to Driscome. "As my car stopped at the corner," he said, "a girl ran down the street as if the Germans were sacking the city. What with the running girl, this broken plaster and the shreds of your picture, I need not ask questions. Looks to me as if something had happened to that beastly theory of yours."

"To the devil with girls and theories!" shakily exclaimed Driscome. "Help me to your car. Take me to the Grand Central. I'm off for a place where a fellow tells me the color is better than even the Bermudas."

IN the October number: KID CARTER AND REFORM *by Howard Philip Rhoades,* the story of a second-story worker who went back to the old home town for "Auld Lang Syne."

THE NERVE OF TIMID THOMPSON

BY EARL G. CURTIS

In which Sloker, hobo extraordinary and joint proprietor of Wander Inn, gives an informal travel lecture and tells how near a man can come to matrimony without hitting it.

EVERAL sheets had been torn from the greasy calendar that hung in the kitchen since Sloker had surveyed the familiar front of Wander Inn. He faced the door a long minute, then lifted his shoulders and shook himself like a dog just out of the rain; thereby putting behind him the freedom of the open road. Sloker was well aware that when he entered the Inn he would assume full charge, thus knocking from Richmond Ed's legs the shackles of burdensome business.

Ed was not at all sorry when he spied the fat, good-natured face of his partner. His ears were itching for the gossip of the wanderer and his own feet were restless. It was his turn to fare forth into Hoboland. Ed hung around until Sloker's hunger was appeased, and only then did the prodigal partner's words appertain to his long absence.

"Ed, you like to lost your pardner this trip."

"How? Was th' bulls after you?" Ed questioned.

"Naw! But I did come near gettin' married."

"Who—you—Sloker?" Ed exploded into loud laughter, and Sloker's face turned a prodigious pink.

"What you laughin' at, you knot-head?" Sloker inquired, his dignity somewhat impaired. "Can't I get married if I want to?"

"Sure; you don't have to ast me—you have to ast th' woman."

"Which same I did," Sloker stated deliberately, enjoying Ed's astonishment. "There's only one reason I ain't a married man today, Ed. She thought she liked another guy better. Though what she seen in him is mor'n I can percolate through my bean."

Sloker leaned back in his chair and sighed contentedly. He was home. He continued his remarks.

"I left here not quite of a mind which way to flit, an' in that promiscuous attitude toward things in general, drifted round all over. But th' little detail of where to go was soon settled for me. One night I got lit up like a torch, an' th' next day, when th' fuel had all burnt out, I found myself on a train with a gang of hard-rock men, on my way to Pitcher's Pass, where they was diggin' a tunnel under one of th' Cumberland Mountings. Th' boss of th' gang informed me none too polite that I had signed up as cook, that he had already paid me a month's wages, an' that I had blowed it in with th' rest of his rough-necks.

"I couldn't recollect nothin' 'bout it a-tall, but that didn't make no difference with th' boss, who was a guy hard of face an' words. I owed him money an' I had to cook it out. That's all there was to it, so far's he was concerned. When I got it all straight I was as happy as a nigger without no arms an' a pocket full of money, lookin' at a crap game. Right there I figured to beat it th' first chance I got. But th' boss must 'ave been a mind reader for he set by me like I was awful good company.

"I didn't need no squirrel to tell me that 'em hard-rock guys was a bunch of tough nuts. You know I ain't exactly a sissy myself, but travellin' with 'em was somethin' like ridin' in th' middle of a battle royal. All th' way to Pitcher's Pass they was scrappin', an' when we at last

got there I was as joyful as a guy could well be at th' fag end of a jag.

"I found at th' camp another he cook, by name of John Thompson, who had been christened Timid because he always evaded a scrap—with honor or without. This here Timid party topped me by ten of th' lankiest inches you ever seen, an' when he set down he reminded me of a carpenter shuttin' up his rule.

"When I got to th' cook shack an' went to work I was plumb disgusted at first, for I found out that I had a woman for a boss, by name Rebecca Meek. She was in entire charge of the culinary department.

"Rebecca was borned in them mountings an' had lived there ever since. She was cert'n'y some woman, Ed. She was 'bout thirty; not too young, you know, an' wasn't bad on th' eyes a-tall. There wasn't nothin' that woman couldn't do when she set her mind to it. She was most capable. Well, to tell it quick, I fell for Rebecca—an' fell hard! Instead of me watchin' for a chance to beat it, th' boss couldn't 'ave fired me.

"Timid an' me was kinder chummy till I found out that he was also sweet on Rebecca, an' then 'twasn't long before we was hatin' rivals. Timid watched me like he was a millionaire an' me a poor man, an' as for me, once I set up near all night list'nin' to Timid howlin' with a toothache, thinkin' maybe he was puttin' up a bluff so he could speak to Rebecca without me hearin' what he said. We slept over th' kitchen, while Rebecca took her maidenly repose in a homey little house up th' hill.

"Mary's lamb didn't have a thing on Timid. Whenever I strolled up to set with Rebecca, he was sure to go, too. An' you can gamble that I never let *him* go up without one able-bodied he-chaperone along to see that he didn't put nothin' over on Sloker.

"Things went along like that for a while, an' Rebecca seemed to like both of us 'bout th' same. At least I couldn't see no difference, an' I cert'n'y looked hard enough. I come to th' conclusion that she'd be mighty liable to take th' first one of us what popped th' question. But so help me Harry, if I could get a decent chanct to lay my palpitatin' heart in her hand without that Timid guy lookin' on. An' you know a man's got delicate feelin's at such times.

"Timid stuck to me like I owed him money till one night I thought I'd lost him. I didn't see him nowheres round. Right then I sighed a long sigh an' made up my mind to ast Rebecca to share what joys an' sorrers th' comin' years helt for Sloker. But when I ambled up to Rebecca's I found out that I hadn't lost Timid a-tall. He was settin' on th' bench just outside Rebecca's open door, outer which th' lamplight shined onto th' clearin' in front of th' house. Timid was all spruced up like a two-by-four dude, white collar an' all. I took a seat as far on th' other end of th' bench as I could an' begin to whistle careless. I couldn't be bothered because *my* clothes had seen cleaner days.

"When Rebecca come out she set exactly in th' middle of th' bench, showin' nobody no favor. There was somethin' in th' air that must 'ave told her that she was a goner this time. Timid hemmed a little an' I hawed a little. Rebecca didn't do nothin' but set there.

"'What a fine moon we have tonight,' said Timid at last.

"'We sure have,' said Rebecca.

"'Aw, I don't know,' I butt in quick. 'I've seen moons much more purtier, huh, Rebecca?'

"'Yep, I reckon so,' said Rebecca.

"Me an' Timid looked black at each other an' nobody so much as whispered. So help me Harry, if I could think of a darn thing to say. Finally it come to me that th' situation would be improved considerably by a little darkness.

"'I don't see no use in th' door bein' open,' I said. 'With such a nice light from th' moon, we don't need th' lamplight out here, do we, Rebecca?'

"With that I edged a little closer to her.

"'That's right,' Timid said, followin' my lead. 'Ain't no sense in th' door bein' open. Th' light hurts my eyes, anyhow.'

"Then Timid *he* edged a little closer to Rebecca. She begins to look at us like she was gettin' skeered.

"'Oh, I couldn't think of shuttin' th' door,' she said, primlike. 'What would th' men all say?'

"'Dang th' men!' I busted out. I was as trembly as a bowl of jelly.

"'Yep, dang 'em!' Timid growled.

"'Mister Sloker! Mister Thompson!' Rebecca said, meanin' for us to cut out th' rough stuff. Rebecca was a lady.

"As easy as we could, me an' Timid, little by little, closed up th' gap between us an' Rebecca. She must 'ave knowed she couldn't put us off no longer. I looked at Timid, an' he seemed busy with his thoughts, settin' there with no more sign of life than a petrified peanut. A bold thought come to me. Th' situation called for action. Just as tender as a lovin' mother, I eased my arm round Rebecca's waist.

"But 'bout half-way round, my hand met Timid's comin' toward me, an' we jerked our lovin' mitts away like we had caught ourselves playin' with th' snout of a alligator. Rebecca was watchin' th' moon an' didn't catch on to none of our didoes. I made up my mind to settle th' thing right there, one way or another.

"'Leave th' blame door open then,' I told her, speakin' kinder bully. 'I got somethin' to say an' I'm goner say it if all th' doors in th' world is open!'

"With no warnin' motions whatever, I grabbed her round th' waist.

"'What he says goes for me, too, an' twice as hard!' Timid said also, an' moreover puttin' *his* arm round her waist. 'I'd say it if all th' world was list'nin', Rebecca!'

"Both of us tried to hug her at th' same time, an' neither one of us did. Rebecca let go a little scream, an' we let go our embrace.

"'I love you, Rebecca,' I told her right out, while somethin' in my bosom jumped like a rabbit. 'My heart is like your open door—open wide for you to come in, an' my love is like th' lamplight spread out on th' grass so purty—like a carpet of gold!'

"'Oh, Mr. Sloker!' said Rebecca.

"'That's goes for me, too, Rebecca!' Timid hollered, kinder wild like. 'Damitall, I don't know no po'try! What he says goes double for me!'

"She stood up an' we did too, both of us hangin' onto a hand. I bowed over th' hand I helt an' kissed it like 'em old courtin' guys used to do in th' olden days of kings an' queens an' th' rest of th' deck. Timid done th' same with his hand. Timid sure was some imitationer.

"Rebecca didn't say a word, but jus' stood there lookin' like she didn't know which way to turn. Then all at onct we seen a man standin' by us. He wore a black bunch of spinach on his chin, but in spite of that hairy handicap, he handled hisself like he was a somebody. Rebecca jerked her hands away from us an' looked at th' big guy like he was th' rent collector an' she was busted.

"'Rebecca, don't you know me?' he ast.

"'Ezra,' she said, kinder doubtful.

"'Yep, Ezra,' the big guy agreed. 'Ezra who went away eight years ago an' told you to wait for him.'

"Rebecca drew herself up pridefully, like th' thoroughbred she was.

"'Ezra,' she said, kinder solemn, 'that's a awful long time for a woman to wait for a man. Eight years,' she continued on, like she was lookin' back an' examinin' ever' month of 'em, 'th' best eight years of a woman's life.'

"She looked at Timid, then at me.

"'Ezra,' she said, soft-like, 'you made me wait a little while too long. During that time—'

"Right there she stopped talkin' an' took a little step an' fell square into th' arms of Timid."

Sloker heaved a deep sigh at the remembrance.

"'Bout two weeks afterwards th' weddin' was to be pulled off, an' when th' day come I was sure one gloomy Gustavus. I wasn't hatin' Timid so much as I was lovin' Rebecca, an' I hadn't give her up yet, even if 'twas supposed to be their weddin' day. I felt like Timid had outlucked me, an' that's all. When that boob Ezra butted in on th' picture th' night we proposed, Rebecca got excited. No blame to her, at that. Any woman would 'ave. 'Tain't ever' one what has three good men

an' true claimin' her at th' same simultaneous time.

"Well, there we was, me an' Timid, one on each side of her, not quite understandin' th' thing. When Rebecca broke th' news to Ezra that he wasn't in th' race a-tall, she got kinder fainty an' fell. Somehow or other, she spun to th' left, right into Timid's arms. Now suppose she had fell to th' right; there was Sloker waitin'. I claim 'twas just a matter of luck which way she fell."

"'Twas fair enough," Ed interposed. "'Twas a good gamble."

"'Twas fair enough in a way; but I didn't believe she liked Timid any better than me, an' I schemed to show him up. Durin' th' day I sneaked away from th' cook shanty an' found me a empty blastin' powder can. I filled her up with dirt, an' made a fuse of twisted brown paper, into which I poured a handful of powder. When I got through with th' can it sure looked like a bomb.

"I was wise that Timid wouldn't 'ave answered to th' name he did if he had any nerve a-tall. When ever'thing was ready I would steal up to th' house an' wait till the sky-pilot had started th' job; then I'd throw th' bomb right there in front of Timid. I wanted Rebecca to see how he acted. When that fuse got to spittin', I was willin' to bet any chanct for Rebecca that he'd beat it an' not wait to take her along. That's exactly what I wanted him to do.

"Th' knot was to be tied in th' clearin' that fronted Rebecca's house. Th' moon was shinin' bright an' filled th' open space with a nice, soft light. Th' hard-rock men an' some of th' mountingeers what had been invited was all there when I crawled under some bushes what fringed th' clearin'.

"Th' parson stepped away from th' common ord'nary mortals, an' combed his whiskers with his fingers. That must 'ave been th' signal for Timid an' Rebecca to come forth from th' house, follered by th' Ezra guy, who was managin' th' whole thing an' enjoyin' hisself immense. He didn't hold no hard feelin's an' looked a lot more happier than Timid. They faced th' parson an' I thought I could see Timid's legs tremblin', an' I laughed in my sleeve. Rebecca handled herself like gettin' married was a ever'day thing with her.

"So help me Harry, Ed, ever'thin' was so solemn an' sad that I come near givin' up Rebecca without a struggle. Th' parson started his spiel, an' then I remembered how bad I wanted Rebecca. I struck a match an' threw th' bomb so that it fell right at th' feet of Timid. That old fuse spitted like th' real thing', an' Rebecca put her hands over her ears like she hated to hear it go off. Th' crowd stayed there just long enough to reco'nize what th' thing looked like—and then they left without sayin' goodbye. Th' mounting folks, led by brother Ezra, hit th' trail up th' hill, an' th' hard-rock men split th' wind goin' down.

"But Timid, *he* stayed right here. He snatched th' bomb from th' ground an' drownded it in a rain-barrel that stood at a corner of th' house. I just squatted there in the bushes an' looked. Then th' parson's scattered brains showed signs of comin' together again, an' he turned to beat it. Timid grabbed him.

"'Finish th' job!' Timid said, commandin'-like.

"Th' parson did. I knowed then that Rebecca was not for Sloker. I slid down th' hill to th' cook shack an' just set an' smoked, an' made up my mind 'twas time for me to wander in. I come to th' conclusion that I didn't want no wife, nohow, an' if I did, I was too darn unlucky to ever cop such a fine woman as Rebecca.

"'Bout a hour after Timid had took unto hisself a wife, he come down an' found me settin' there by my lonely. He stuck out his mitt, an' I took it an' shook it real friendly.

"'Well, it's all over,' said Timid.

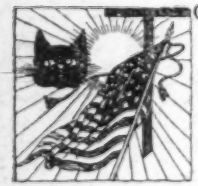
"'I'm doggone glad,' I told him. 'You deserve her, Timid, for 'twas a brave an' devilish ack, you handlin' th' bomb thataway—' an' then I said, apologizin'-like—'even though 'twas a fake.'

"'Aw, Sloker, I knowed that all th' time,' said Timid, with a most outrageous grin. 'I was watchin' you when you made it.'"

IN THE NAME OF KENTUCKY

BY HAPSBURG LIEBE

Twice in the night comes the cry: "Corporal of the guard—post four." And each time the corporal of the guard turns out the relief and finds only an empty hut and signs of a struggle at post four.



TORFELD put down his empty beer mug and beckoned to a news vender. Guben drank the last of his own lager, laced his pudgy fingers together on the little table and began to watch his companion's face. He saw Torfeld's shaggy brows knit as he bent closer to the paper.

"What is it, *mein freund?*" asked Guben.

The other pushed back his helmet and looked over the sheet. "One of our U's has sunk a big liner, the *Lusitania*, with Americans on board," said Torfeld, "and that may bring America into the war against us."

"Bah!" laughed Guben. "The Americans can't fight, won't fight. But here comes— Ah, how is it with you, Father Faubreville?"

Guben rose, and so did Torfeld, to shake the hand of the wizened little padre. Faubreville was a Spaniard, and an adventurer of a strange sort; he was at home anywhere in the world; and wherever there was a war, there one was very likely to find him whom a dozen nations knew as the Little Padre. He never fought; he was still the man of God. Germany and her allies loved him, as did France and her allies. I do not know how it happened that he was in Berlin; by all the laws of precedence, he should have been ministering to the wounded and dying in some field hospital.

When greetings had been exchanged, the Little Padre seated himself with the two members of the Imperial Guard, and fresh lager was ordered. The *Lusitania* episode was promptly brought up.

"But it will amount to nothing," declared Torfeld. "As Guben there has just said, the Americans won't fight; they are weaklings."

"You are mistaken, *amigo mio*," quickly replied the Little Padre. Faubreville enjoyed rare freedom of speech, even in Germany. "I myself have seen them fight. It was in the Philippines. I was with a regiment there for months, a regiment noted for its dare-deviltry, which called itself whimsically, 'The Suicide Outfit.' Now let me tell you the story of one American; it will illustrate the real American spirit. His name was Munford, and he was from that *Estado* that they call Kentucky. And bear in mind as I tell you, my friends Torfeld and Guben, that America has millions upon millions of men like Munford; and remember also, remember especially, that those like the fellow Carlin, are a precious few."

The Little Padre calmly drank half his mug of beer and began his story of one American, and that one a private soldier:

"The Suicide Outfit was in camp at Catbalogan, which is on the island that was known very aptly as Bloody Samar. One thick, black night the cry of a sentry rang out from the waterfront:

"'Corporal o' the guard—post four—double time! Corporal o' the guard—post four—'

"The words sounded sharp and distinct in the tomblike stillness, like stones thrown against a hollow, metallic wall. The sentries between post four and the guardhouse relayed the call to the ears of Corporal Winton, who was a very good friend of mine.

"Winton had but that moment looked at his wrist watch, having noted sleepily that the hour was close upon that of midnight. He caught up his rifle by its muz-

zle and went, dragging the weapon behind him, to the low doorway of the guard's quarters; and quick beside him was private Munford, who was six feet tall, rawboned and serious, all of a soldier and a perfect marksman, and very proud of the fact that he was from that *Estado* that they have named Kentucky.

"'Carlin is on number four,' Winton muttered sourly. 'I am almost decided not to go. Ten chances to one, he is deceiving us again.'

"'Yes, Carlin is on number four,' said private Munford. 'He relieved me there an hour ago. But there is something wrong; it is as certain as that we are a foot in height, my corporal. Did you notice how the latter part of the call faded out to nothing?'

"'I did not hear the original,' growled the corporal of the guard. 'Something wrong? Your honorable grandmother!' exclaimed Winton, in disgust. 'Carlin is merely too sleepy to do his turn, that's all! He will declare that he is sick. You wait, and you will see. But let us go!'

"With that, he roused two others of the guard, and they set out hastily for post number four.

"Let me tell you about the fellow Carlin before I proceed farther, *mis amigos*. Carlin had enlisted as what is known as a low private in the rear rank, and there he had stayed—but with some difficulty. He had been by no means a soldier; he had avoided all the marches possible; he had lied out of duty; he had nothing whatever to his credit, either with the officers or with the enlisted men—with a single exception.

"That exception was big Private Munford. For Carlin, who was oily and heavy and dark, had on the day of his enlistment walked up to Munford and said with outstretched hand:

"'I, too, am from Kentucky.'

"And Munford firmly believed that, since the two of them were the sole representatives his *Estado* had in the company, the company would judge the whole of Kentucky by the doings of himself and Carlin!

"All was dark and silent when Corporal Winton and the three privates approached post number four. There was no breath of challenge as they walked straight up to the nipa and bamboo hut that served as a sentry's box by night and as an office for the officer of the port by day. Winton called Carlin's name softly, but got no response. Then he leaned in at the open doorway and scratched a Chinese match.

"The place was empty!

"But on the ground he found the hilt of a broken bolo and a scrap of pinacloth. Munford bent over, his keen gray eyes as hard as the steel of his bayonet, and picked up Carlin's battered campaign hat. He held it toward his corporal; his corporal held toward him the rough hilt of Carabao-horn and brass.

"'He has given a good account of himself!' Munford cried, in a voice that impressed the non-commissioned officer. 'See there—the wall there is broken through; look at these marks of a struggle, my corporal! I have often told you there was undug gold in Carlin! You cannot wish for more proof that he was a fighter when there was real necessity for it. Had they not stolen upon him, he would have taken some heads, too!'

"Winton very thoughtfully and silently dropped the burnt match.

"'He has been made a prisoner,' Munford continued. 'I am most certain that our company will speak his name without laughing when the truth of the affair becomes known.'

"How anxious was Munford that Carlin should be looked upon as a brave man! To me it was almost pitiful.

"'You are familiar with the orders for this post,' muttered the corporal. 'Take it, and keep a sharp watch on all sides.'

"Munford obediently stepped inside the hut. The corporal of the guard and the two others shouldered their rifles and went back to the guardhouse.

"Winton jabbed the butt of his rifle down in a corner with a lowly spoken imprecation. Captain Gunter was sour because of his malaria, and there was a great chance that he would not like to be awakened at that hour to listen to a report that would say merely that Carlin had been captured.

Had it been anyone except the poltroon, it would have been different. Any other man of the company was worth an uproar, and perhaps a quick march into the treacherous interior of the island; but Carlin was not.

"He stopped turning the question over in his mind and bent an ear toward the doorway. He heard a voice from post number four, a voice so big that there was small necessity for a relay.

"'Corporal o' the guard—*the enemy!*'

"And close after it there came three rifle shots. Then the thick silence of the Philippine night settled down again.

"Winton roused out the two reliefs that were off duty and hastened with them to the hut on the bay shore. Again he met with not a breath of challenge; again there was no response to his questioning voice. A lighted match showed him a rifle's strap that had been cut away, and a handful of Spanish silver, lying on the ground just inside the door. The walls of the hut had been almost completely demolished, as though in a desperate struggle.

"'Now,' said Corporal Winton, a little pale under his deep tan, 'now I can wake the captain. The Filipinos have captured a man who is a real American soldier.'

"Daybreak found private Munford sitting alone among the gray stones that covered the crest of a mountain that rose precipitously behind Catbalogan. In the crooked streets below him half the regiment was hurrying hither and thither, no doubt making preparations for a march to rescue him. Stretched out across the miles that lay between him and the other side of the island, he could see a dense deep-green, jungle-wilderness of bamboo and coconut palm and wild banana; this, he knew, was the stamping ground of the insurgents under General Ramon Invar.

"Munford tipped his canteen and took a swallow of very warm water, then he looked again toward the village below. He saw a thin line of khaki-clad men leaving it, coming directly toward him: to save time they were going to cross the mountain barrier. Munford frowned and rose, and once more began to search the interior with his keen eyes.

"A mile inward, he caught a glimpse of a dirty-white serpent of men creeping over a low hill.

"There was a minute, perhaps, of indecision; then, stooping, darting from one stone to another stone, Munford began the descent of the rugged slope in the direction in which he had seen the insurgents. Soon he had reached the thicker growth of the lower ground, where he quickened his pace despite the tangle of vines, guiding his footsteps toward the hostile forces with the wonderful accuracy of the born woodsman. When at the point which he regarded best for his purpose, he hid himself well in a clump of bamboos and waited.

"A few minutes later, the dirty-white serpent of men appeared in full view before him, about a hundred feet away; they were coming as silently as spirits, and all but two of them were armed with Mauser rifles. At the head of the serpent he saw a figure that was very familiar to his gaze; it was a figure that was low and heavy, and it was garbed in the flimsy uniform of an insurgent officer; in short, it was Carlin, the degenerate, now a deserter and a traitor. Close behind Carlin, brown and wiry, a naked sword in his hand, was General Ramon Invar, who was a very bad mixture of Visayan ignorance, Moro fanaticism, and pure devil.

"But Munford did not evince the slightest astonishment at that which he saw. He moved not a muscle, but waited patiently until Invar's forces were very near to him. Then he called out sharply:

"'Don't let them shoot me, Carlin, my friend!'

"The natives and their white leader halted, and more than a score of rifles were leveled toward the bamboos that hid Munford.

"'Is it you, Munford?' asked Carlin.

"'Yes, it is I,' was the quick answer. 'Why did you not tell me? I would have gone with you! Do you not think the gibes they gave you—cut me to the heart, too? I have always taken your part, my comrade. And now I have deserted for the privilege of being with you!'

"Carlin's eyes brightened under their villainous brows.

"'That is correct,' he replied; 'you have always been my friend. I am glad you came, Munford.'

"He turned to Invar, who stood wondering, his long sword resting uneasily against his thin shoulder. 'General,' said this fellow Carlin, 'that man and I are from the same *Estado*—which is called Kentucky. He is a good man, and he wishes to join you in your fight for independence. Order your men not to fire upon him, General.'

"Invar stepped out of the ranks and looked down the long line of brown faces. He raised his sword and forbade anyone to fire upon Munford. Then Munford, red-faced and perspiring, crawled from his hiding-place and received an introduction to the Filipino chieftain.

"'I will make you a major,' smiled Invar. 'As soon as we are again at my headquarters, you shall have a major's uniform.'

"'We are now on our way to fire down upon Catbalogan from the mountain's crest,' Carlin explained. 'Of course you will go with us, for you will be our very best marksman!'

"Munford shook his head. 'Half the regiment,' said he, 'is now nearly to the top of that mountain. They are looking for us; they think we have been captured, you know—which is just what we wished them to think.'

"'Half the regiment!' cried Carlin, going somewhat pale.

"He turned to Ramon Invar and spoke to him in Spanish. Another minute and Invar's forces had faced about and were moving rapidly toward the thick interior of the island, and the two white men brought up the rear of the line. Invar was afraid to meet the half of that Suicide Outfit there in the jungle! The cowardly surprise attack, that was Invar's way.

"A short time later, and the line had taken to a shallow river, which was the Filipino leader's method of throwing the Americans off his trail in event they gave pursuit.

"After two or three hours of rapid travelling, they entered a grassy and treeless dell, in which Munford saw a double row of nipa huts that had been built on bamboo framework.

"'That,' Carlin informed Munford, 'is our stronghold and headquarters; what do you think of it, comrade?'

"'Not a very strong stronghold,' said Munford, 'except that it would be extremely hard to find.'

"'Hard to find!' laughed Carlin. 'I should say! You see, I had already made arrangement with a spy in the village, which explains how I found the place.'

"Invar led the two white men through the door of a hut that served as his quarters, and there the three seated themselves on a grass mat. Then Invar called to him his servant and ordered that food be set before them.

"'And be quick, Ignatio,' frowned Invar, 'or I shall pass my sword between your head and your body.'

"In a remarkably short time, rice and fishes, with red bananas and yellow mangoes, were placed before the Americans and the insurgent general. The three fell to eating with their fingers, washing the food down with *tuba* from coconut shells.

"When the meal was finished, Invar rose and brought a flag, the flag of the sun and triangle.

"'Major Munford,' he announced, 'will now take the oath of allegiance. You will kneel, Major Munford.'

"Now this was a thing that Private Munford had not bargained for. He swallowed hard and bitterly. Those Americans, they do not like to swear falsely. But in another moment he was on his knees and swearing by the one true God and by the Holy Virgin to be loyal forever to the flag of the triangle and the sun.

"In the afternoon, while the natives and their commander were taking their daily siestas, Munford lured Carlin to the bank of a small lake that lay not far from the so-called stronghold. Carlin sat down and began to remove his shoes, preparatory to bathing himself. Under pretense of following suit, Munford tied his shoes tighter.

"'Carlin,' very slowly said Munford, 'what do you suppose the people back in

the *Estado* of old Kentucky will think of you? What will your old mother, of whom you have told me more than once, say when she learns that you have turned deserter and traitor and pulled your heart wrong side out to follow the standard of the enemy?'

"'What do you suppose,' snapped Carlin, that dog, 'they will think of your own deserting?'

"Munford gazed silently at the dark and evil face of the other for a full minute.

"'I came to bring you back,' he said. 'There is time. We can tell them what they already believe, my comrade; that we were captured and brought here against our wills. If you will go back with me, Carlin, my friend, I will wound myself and tell them that you saved my life. I have here my bayonet; see? With it I will slash myself in the breast and on the arms. Will you not do that, Carlin?'

"'No!' cried Carlin. 'I have chosen my path, and I shall keep it. You are afraid, Munford!'

"'I am not afraid, Carlin,' said Munford. 'Oh, my comrade, can nothing dissuade you? Will you not go back with me?'

"'Nothing can force me to go back with you,' answered Carlin. 'There I was a mere private soldier; here I shall be a major. Understand me now, Munford, I will not go back.'

"Munford knew he meant it. Munford rose, straight and grand, a human god, ready for the great sacrifice. His gray eyes burned into the other's small, shriveled soul as though they would set it ablaze with the fire that it so richly deserved; his jaws were clamped against each other as with some terrible madness. Then Munford drew his long, knife-like bayonet from its scabbard at his hip.

"Carlin saw the flash of the shining metal and sprang to his feet with his own bayonet in his hand. Hand to hand they fought, minute after minute. Then Munford, his face and breast covered with bleeding gashes from the other's weapon, saw his opportunity; straight through the heart of the deserter Carlin he sent the slender point of his bayonet.

"He did it in the name of that *Estado* that they call Kentucky. A minute later he put the body across his shoulder and hastened toward Catbalogan with it.

"It was late in the night when he reached the village. He dropped all that was left of Carlin at the guardhouse door, and drew himself up straight; but the corporal of the guard had to hold him that he might not fall.

"'You should have seen the fight Carlin made!' said this Munford. 'He killed dozens of them before they put him down. See the gashes—and that hole? See them, you men who laughed at Carlin—'

"He fainted, and they carried him away to the hospital. And that—listen to me, Torfeld and Guben, my friends—that is the spirit you will fight when you fight America!"

THE third story in "The Pardners of Wander Inn" series, relating the alternate adventures of Richmond Ed and Sloker, will appear in the October number. Look for HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER *by Earl G. Curtis.*

EVERY MAN

BY ANNA BROWNELL DUNAWAY

Being an inquiry into the mormonistic tendencies of men with incidental speculation regarding the probable advantage at times of the Georgette blouse over the mackintosh of the vintage of 1900.

I HAVE been married twelve years and I think that is long enough for any woman to know all that is worth knowing about a man and much that isn't. I am not knocking marriage nor men for I am very happily married myself, but I would just like to emphatically endorse a statement that has often been made in regard to men, and that is, that every man is at heart a Mormon. I endorse the statement advisedly and believe it to be incontrovertible.

I will not even leave Henry out of this sweeping arraignment. While, after twelve years of married life, he is at present writing fairly docile, I have too often observed his weather eye roving in the direction of a pretty woman. Yet Henry is impeccable as husbands go. But he cannot help this tendency. It is his birthright, his inheritance, his prerogative as a lord of creation. He can no more help this attribute than he can help the fact that he possesses a cowlick. Neither can any other man. I am convinced that it is this mormonistic tendency and not money, that is the root of all evil. Almost any woman can get a husband but—can she keep him? That is the acid test.

I knew a lawyer who said that five years was enough to live with any woman. The last I heard he was on his second instalment. I should like to hear Henry voice such an opinion. But then, this story isn't about Henry. Thinking about Clovis and her troubles got me started on my pet theory.

I just wish you could see Clovis as she looked three years ago, at the time of her engagement to Wilbur Farr. She reminded me for all the world of the clove pinks in an old-fashioned garden with flower beds outlined with shells and redolent of rosemary. She had just such sweet, modest grace, and there was always a dash of pink under her clear, white skin, and she seemed to fairly exhale the aromatic freshness of an old-time garden. Henry admired her immensely—within limits of course—and as for Wilbur Farr, he was really carried away. He had come to Westerville to practice medicine directly upon his graduation from a medical college. But a year after their engagement he transferred his practise to the neighboring city of Mapleton. For Westerville was too loyal to its old doctor to be a promising field.

Clovis and her widowed mother lived right next door to us. After Wilbur left, the girl fairly threw herself into the work of saving for her new home. She taught in summer institutes, and finally entered the race for County Superintendent and won, as Henry would say, in a walk. For Clovis was awfully popular. Everybody had known her since she was a little girl, and there wasn't a woman in Westerville but what knew her age to a day.

Three years tells a great deal on a woman's youth, especially if she is working too hard, and presently people began whispering in charitable asides that Clovis was "getting on." Her eyes gave out under the strain and she took to wearing glasses. Not the pretty kind, with a chain and a gold hairpin, but the regular goggles style, with bows that curled around her little pink ears and added ten years to her age.

And she grew careless about her clothes—not sloppy of course—Clovis was too

neat for that, but she seldom got anything new and seemed to lose all interest in dressing up. "What's the use?" she would say to me deprecatingly, when I urged her to get something bright and pretty. "What's the use, Auntie Miller? I'm engaged, and Wilbur isn't here and everybody knows me here in Westerville. It's a case of 'love me, love my old clothes.'"

It takes some years of married life to take that kind of conceit out of a woman. But many are that way. After they have become engaged they rest, figuratively speaking, on their oars. But you cannot tell them anything. It takes bitter experience and sometimes a breach of promise case to make them change their views.

When Henry stopped noticing Clovis, I began to get worried, for in matters of this kind Henry is a sort of weather vane. And, after a time, I noticed that Wilbur came less and less frequently. Clovis's mother began to wear a sort of harried look. And Clovis herself began to droop perceptibly.

One night I was sitting out on the porch waiting for Henry to come home from board meeting—I have long ago learned to close my eyes to so-called business appointments that last till all hours of the night—when Clovis came over and sat beside me. I saw at once that something was wrong. All the old, sweet color was gone, and for the first time I noticed how worn and thin she was.

"There, there!" I said finally, breaking a pregnant silence, "tell Auntie Miller."

She broke into a fit of sobbing and threw a letter into my lap. I turned on the porch light, and Clovis walked off toward the syringa bush while I read the letter. It was from Wilbur. There were only two pages, written in a constrained, abrupt way. He told of his growing success, of the fine people he roomed with, of the expenses of city life. Then without preface or warning he closed with these words:

"Clovis, I am convinced that our engagement was a mistake. Three years ago I loved you madly. Now, I am amazed to find that I do not care for you as one cares for the woman he would make his wife. I have tried to be and am true to you, but I feel that marriage under the circumstances will be wrong. We should have married three years ago. Long engagements are all wrong. No, there is no one else. It is only that I no longer care. I want to be free. Will you release me, Clovis, and in the future think of me only as

Your sincere friend,
Wilbur."

When I had read the letter I considered it thoughtfully. It was damaging enough, but even at that, I did not consider Wilbur a cad. Of course in a regular novel such a hero would not do at all. He would be impossible. He would have to be eliminated by gas or a motor accident and give place to another hero whose love was of the lasting quality. But as men go in real life I saw nothing the matter with Wilbur. He was human that was all. He was daily meeting up with other girls,—girls who encouraged the Morman (or the Adam) in him. Moreover, Clovis had faded. She was not keeping up with the game.

When she returned from the shadow of the syringa bush I noticed a determined line about the gentle mouth.

"Are you going to give him up?" I queried.

"I am not," she declared decidedly. "Mother says it is criminal for a man to play with a girl in this way. I have wired him that I am coming tomorrow. Mother is going with me."

"Oh, Clovis," I entreated, "look your—"

But she was gone. I wanted to tell her some things out of my own experience. To urge her to look her best; to play the game fairly; but the opportunity was gone.

Somehow, I knew that Clovis would fail in her mission. She had not been married twelve years as I had. She did not know men. But with all my misgivings, I was not prepared for the look of utter hopelessness that shadowed the gray eyes when she returned.

"What do you think, Auntie Miller," she said to me in a curious, detached way, as if she were speaking of another's unhappiness, "Wilbur still insists that I release

him,—after my going to him and all; and after what mother said to him."

Now I knew there had been bungling. In all these cases there is either too much mother or too much mother-in-law. I felt that Clovis's mother had, to use a trite expression, butted in disastrously, but I said nothing. I flatter myself on my discretion; that too, comes with marriage. Too often it is the better part of valor.

I made her a fresh cup of tea and set before her a plate of my hermits. She said she couldn't eat a mouthful, but I noticed, during her recital, that she ate five. That's another impossibility for a heroine of fiction. In stories they pine away and are all but forcibly fed through a tube.

"What did you wear?" I demanded.

"Wear?" she echoed, as if that were as far away from the question as the antipodes. "Why, a mackintosh and rubbers. It was fearfully wet and sloppy. It couldn't have been a worse time," she ended drearily.

I looked at her with an appraising eye. She wore an old brown serge of a style two years back. Mentally, I added to this a last year's hat, mackintosh and galoshes. She caught my eye and blushed faintly.

"I intended to wear my new hat," she deprecated, "but it was so rainy."

"I would count a fifty-dollar hat," I said severely, "well lost for love."

"After all, what are mere clothes?" she said wearily. "That is not the issue."

I did not press the point. Instead, I asked blandly:

"Where did you stop? At the Midway, I suppose."

Clovis regarded me in astonishment.

"The Midway? Why, Auntie Miller, that is the bon ton hotel. It is four dollars a day and up."

"What of it?" said I.

"I couldn't think of being so extravagant," she murmured.

"But you make eighteen hundred a year, Clovis," I remonstrated.

She flushed under my disapproving eye.

"Yes, but you know how high living is. And then I am saving—I was saving"—her voice choked—"for our home."

"Where did you stop, then?" I demanded.

"Why, at the Pacific House. I assure you"—she faced me defiantly, somewhat nettled at my look—"that it is quite respectable."

"It is a hang-out," I remarked severely, "for loafers and railroad men. But tell me all about it. I'll try not to interrupt again."

"Mother waited in her room," began Clovis, after a pause, "while Wilbur and I talked. If I had hoped to win him back, Auntie Miller, I failed miserably. Oh, it was dreadful." She started up and walked the floor in her distress. "Everything was so commonplace, and people stared so, and the rain poured steadily. Men trooped in all wet and steamy, and the supper was horrible. Wilbur hardly tasted it. He said the whole place gave him the jim-jams."

I was dying to say something, but controlled myself. I have not been married twelve years for nothing.

"After supper," continued Clovis, "he put me in a closed electric and took me over the city. The streets are paved and it was much nicer than that stuffy hotel. He showed me where he roomed. It was in a beautiful house in the best part of the town. It was all lighted up, and I caught a glimpse of a grand piano and a young woman playing it. Wilbur said they were very select people. Auntie Miller, I am afraid Wilbur has grown a little snobbish."

"Very likely," I agreed. "A little snobbishness doesn't hurt anybody. A man had better be snobbish than to hang around saloons and pool halls. Was the girl at the piano fair to look upon?"

"I could not see her face, but you are mistaken if you think Wilbur is interested in her. He has just ceased to care. I told him that I loved him too well to give him up, that I absolutely refused to do so."

I looked at Clovis in amazement. She was a gentle little thing and had always been like wax in Wilbur's hands. Now she reminded me of those black-eyed Nemeses of fiction who poison, shoot or stab their faithless lovers.

"Is it well, Clovis, dear," I expostulated gently, "to bind him to his contract? What is an empty engagement if the heart is not in it?"

"Nevertheless, I will not release him," declared Clovis firmly. "Is a man to wreck a girl's whole life with impunity?"

"A man is a man," I said pungently. "He will not be driven; he will not be bound; he must be led. Clovis, listen. I know more about men than you do. I have worked harder to keep Henry's affections than I ever did to gain them. I have routed whole battalions of women, as it were, with banners flying. I know whereof I speak. Promise me to do absolutely as I tell you and you will have Wilbur fairly dragging you to the altar."

Clovis stared at me out of startled eyes.

"Tell me how," she implored. "Everybody knows that Mr. Miller is crazy about you. Why, he acts just like a lover—"

"Oh, Henry does very well," I interrupted. "A good husband is a gift of the gods. Still, one cannot be too discriminating nor yet look a gift horse in the mouth."

But Clovis was too troubled to notice this sarcasm.

"Wilbur says," she went on, as if to herself, "that if I will not break the engagement he will have to, in honor, abide by my decision; that he will marry me of course; but his heart is not in it. He does not care to discuss the future. He says it is out of the question for him to marry now; that he must think of his career. He—oh, Auntie Miller, I feel as if I had reached the end of the road. It is terrible to give your heart away and have it treated as Wilbur has treated mine. He loved me once; and now, after three years, I love him more than ever. Why has he changed?"

"The eternal question, Clovis. It is simply unanswerable. Men are men. Don't you remember the words of that silly old song:

'My love is like a little bird
That flits about from tree to tree;
And when he finds a fairer face
He then forgets to think of me.'"

"Their love is only skin deep then," said Cloivs bitterly.

"Apparently. Clovis, I am going to speak with the plainness of an old friend. Wilbur is too sure of you. You should have kept him guessing. Instead, you have worn your heart on your sleeve for daws to peck at—"

"Auntie Miller—"

"I assure you, Clovis," I grimaced in stern parent style, "that this hurts me worse than it does you. It is nothing to be ashamed of, an honest, pure and holy love like yours; but it feeds a man's vanity. It makes him sigh for other worlds to conquer. Now I am going to help you, Clovis; but you must do your part. And you must obey me absolutely. Will you?"

"Oh, absolutely!" cried the girl, a faint hope lighting her eyes. Unconsciously she dimpled, and her eyes met mine with an expression that was perilously near a wink. I took heart of grace. Here was promising material if—

How often that "if" intruded itself in the days that followed. I forbade Clovis to answer Wilbur's letters, which came tardily enough. I took her with me on shopping excursions that left her divided between alarm and sheer delight. I walked her to a famous oculist, who said hers was only a case of eye-strain, and who exchanged the hideous bowed spectacles for a nifty little pair that pinched her Grecian nose at just the most becoming angle. From these dangled a tiny gold chain, and a coquettish hairpin that lost itself in the coppery masses of her red-brown hair.

My greatest stroke of finesse was the elimination of Mother. I found it necessary to run down to Mapleton, and offered to take Clovis along.

"It will be your chance," I told her, "to beard the lion in his den, give him his ring, and set him free from bondage."

Clovis turned white and clung to a chair.

"Shall I—must I give him his freedom?" she begged pathetically.

"Offer it to him. Hand it to him indifferently. Ten to one, if you play the game, Clovis, he will not take it. If he does, he is not the man I think he is; nor do you want him. Do you want a captive for a husband?"

Clovis was trying on a new suit that had just been sent home. It was a beautiful creation and represented almost a whole month's salary; but it quite transformed her. The girl looked chic, stunning, irresistible. She said now as she passed an approving hand over it:

"Just think what the money in this suit would buy for our home."

"Leave the home furnishings to him, child," I admonished, "and to the wedding guests. The world will wag on if you don't have a cuckoo clock. This is the rose-time of your life. Youth will never come your way again; make the most of it."

"I will," she said quietly, and her chin lifted high. With her new clothes a subtle quality had crept into her voice and manner. A sort of aloofness as it were, that sat well upon her. Even her mother noticed the change, but she said nothing. I had seen to that with my usual finesse. Mrs. Harrow had weighed three husbands in the balances and found them wanting. She too, knew something about men.

The day we went to Mapleton the sun was shining bright. I had seen to that too. Clovis was lovely in the new suit that just touched the high tops of perfectly immaculate boots. Her hat was a Frenchy affair with a rose facing that deepened the clove pink of her cheeks. Looking at her, with her well-bred air, correct even to the bag which she carried and to the Perrin gloves, I felt that the battle was half won. Still—who could tell? Was she actress enough to conceal before Wilbur the old, adoring, tell-tale manner?

Henry saw us off, and I assure you his weather eye did full duty in Clovis's direction. This was indeed a good sign and augured well for our success.

"You're the prettiest thing, Chloe," said he admiringly, "that I ever saw—with one exception." And he bowed gallantly to me. Henry is very diplomatic; I will say that for him. And then, too, I did have on a new man-tailored, apple-green suit. As Josiah Allen's wife says, I looked well.

As we neared the station, I took the bull again, figuratively speaking, by the horns.

"We will stop at the Midway," I announced firmly.

"Certainly," said Clovis, in that same aloof, detached way.

Arriving at the Midway, we were shown to a room with appointments that surprised even me—and I am something of a traveler. There is something about the pomp, the brass and buttons of a big hotel that seems to lift one out of the commonplace. After we had looked about a bit and accepted ice-water and all the perquisites of our exalted postion with the laudable aim of getting all we could for our money, Clovis wrote a note on Midway stationery and dispatched it by messenger to Wilbur. Would he dine with Mrs. Miller and herself in the grill room of the Midway at six-thirty?

At ten minutes to that hour Clovis started toward the parlor; but I restrained her.

"Let him wait awhile," I said composedly. "It will do him good."

She looked at me and flushed. Strolling over to the desk she leisurely wrote a postcard. Plainly, Clovis was learning.

It was five minutes past the hour when we descended. As she swept through the lobby, coolly indifferent to the admiring stares, I could not but mentally contrast her to the shabby, drooping figure that had met Wilbur in the dingy parlor of the Pacific House. Wilbur was fidgeting uneasily in a chair, but he sprang up at sight of us and gazed as if he doubted his eyesight.

"Why, Clovis," I heard him gasp, with more eagerness in his tones than I had heard in a twelvemonth.

"How do you do, Wilbur," said Clovis coolly, giving him just the tips of her fingers in the perfectly fitting gloves.

Still dazedly, Wilbur followed us to a perfectly appointed table where obsequious, white-clad waiters stood at our elbows. A Hungarian orchestra was playing behind the palms. Clovis was radiant. Her rose-colored Georgette blouse half concealed, half revealed, the delicate throat and rounded arms. It was over the dessert that she carelessly stripped off a ring that blazed on her third finger.

"Here is your ring, Wilbur," she said steadily. "You do not mind Auntie Miller of course; she has shared our joys and sorrows so long. The—letters and presents I will send to you by express."

But Wilbur was pushing back the ring upon the slender finger.

"Clovis," he begged, "don't. I am not worthy of you, I know. I—I don't deserve you. Is—is there someone else?"

"No one in particular," said Clovis, and I was sure that her downcast eyes held a twinkle. "But I don't want to bind you to this contract, especially since your heart is not in it."

"Heart?" cried Wilbur. "Heart?" He was fairly devouring her with his eyes. I felt that only my presence and that of the diners kept him from seizing her in his arms. "Listen, Clovis." He leaned toward her and spoke almost in a whisper. "I was a fool, absolutely. Can't think what got into me. Why I am crazy—absolutely crazy about you."

"There is no doubt about your being crazy," said I pointedly. "Even the waiters are grinning."

We all laughed, which relieved the strain. Just then a lady with a lorgnette touched Wilbur on the shoulder. Another and a youngish-looking woman was with her, and they both looked, as Henry would say, all to the purple.

"Ah, gay deceiver," whispered the older woman playfully.

Wilbur gulped. Yes, actually, that is the only word in the English language that expresses it. The young woman was regarding him intently beneath half-veiled lids. She was undeniably pretty, but I detected in her make-up all the earmarks of a vampire. Nearly all women have them, but some to a marked extent. But Wilbur, recovering, grasped the older woman's hands beamingly.

"My fiancée, Miss Harrow," he introduced, with the pride of possession in his tones, "and our mutual friend, Mrs. Miller. Clovis, I am so glad to have you meet"—he grinned teasingly; it was plain that Hamlet was himself again—"my landlady, Mrs. Poindexter and her daughter, Miss Estelle."

"Landlady," deprecated Mrs. Poindexter, and countered gaily, "Doctor Farr is one of my hallroom boys." Laughing, they passed on, but I noticed that Estelle, from their table, watched us intently.

"What do you say," proposed Wilbur, looking yearningly at Clovis, "what do you say to the theatre or the movies or a drive—"

"Excuse me," I said, rising. "I am sure Henry would never permit of my gallivanting about in that way. He is very particular about the company I keep. But I would say, Clovis, when you care to return, that the latchstring of No. 24 is always out."

Now, of course, to tell the plain, unvarnished truth, I should have loved to go along for, if I have been married twelve years, I have not yet reached the point where desire fails and the grasshopper is a burden. But I knew my cards too well. So, after I had read everything readable in our room, including the rules and regulations, I fell into a quiet sleep, from which I was awakened by a most ecstatic squeeze. I opened my eyes to behold Clovis bending over me with a sheaf of American Beauties in one hand and a five-pound box of chocolates in the other.

"It's going to be in a month," she whispered shyly. "I have set the day. Wilbur insisted."

"H'm!" said I; "and what about the career?"

"He says he can't make good without me."

"And what about your job as County Superintendent?"

"Oh," smiled Clovis, "there are plenty of people ready to step into my shoes."

"H'm!" said I again; and added somewhat irrelevantly: "That Miss Poindexter is not a bad looker."

"Why, no," agreed Clovis magnanimously, "not at all. Wilbur admires her immensely. He says she has exquisite taste and is *so* sympathetic, and she is a wonderful musician; but his interest in her is merely—purely platonic."

"Ah, platonic," I echoed, and hid a cynical smile in the roses. Marriage brings out the cynical trait in women.

BEATTY

BY HENRY D. MUIR

Starting something he couldn't finish was nothing in Beatty's young life. With him, a motion to lay on the table was always in order, and the volume of unfinished business he accumulated would have done credit to a United States Senator.

HEN Professor Jarvis sought out William J. Beatty, the village jack-of-all-trades, to assist him in erecting a little summer cottage on the swarded shore of Salmon Lake, he put into motion more psychology than he had taught the class of '13 during the whole long winter. Marvelous to note, some of this same psychology stirred the arid bosom of the professor himself. The reins taken up again in the fall, it was soon observed by the dullest of the dullards that the "exception" now covered at least five-eighths of the "rule." As "Dizzy Lizzie" lightly put it, there was "some curve to the prof."

Yet the initiatory greeting of the two was commonplace to a degree. The professor was on the dubious prowl for "labor;" Beatty was at home quietly spading the garden. Recommended by the station agent for the part, he amply looked it. Short but sturdy was Beatty, (not yet thirty, one might guess), with long, muscular arms, wiry legs, alert brown eyes, and the Celtic grin of good-nature. He was all gusto for the plans. Rome at last was to be built in a day. Yes, he would be "on the job" bright and early next morning and the chips would surely fly.

Certainly this was the man. Though "flying chips," as an actuality, sailed but sparsely through the executive thoughts of the phlegmatic professor, (for his cottage was of the ready-cut, "built-in-a-day" type, shipped by freight as "lumber"), he accepted the metaphor with a gracious bow. Relief at this ending of the quest, blending with his native though diffident courtesy, even brought him to the threshold of a smile. The extra dollar per day demanded by the optimistic carpenter was a splatter merely in the stream of mutual enthusiasm.

Sure enough; Carpenter Beatty and his tawny-haired dog Pontiac, were found on the tracks at 8 A. M., just below the sleepy little depot, and briskly the work proceeded through the soft, rain-dashed April morning, the marked material being loaded into a stout coal-wagon and brought through the mud and sand to the shrubbed site overhanging the small but cove-indented lake that in all probability never had known the flap of a salmon. This omission, however, did not disturb the professor in the tiniest. He surveyed from atop the first load of his unadjusted cottage, the scene as it lay under light and lifting mist, and his gray eyes sparkled with anticipatory relish of quietudes and solitudes to come. Here, of a surety, the concluding meaty chapters of the Great Treatise would promptly and decisively be drilled into line. Reverie claimed him; and Beatty, descending with nimble leap, was loath to intrude. Still, time the golden, minting him dollars in its stately passage, was now slipping, unbridled; the minutes must have poise and direction; the wage must be earned. So the work speeded. By noon the professor could proudly present for novel self-inspection a worthy brace of mechanic's hands—browned, blistered, slivered. Under the ferreting eyes of Boss Beatty he was becoming "a competent."

As for Beatty himself, that day and the next, he was a veritable "work glutton." Posts, sills, flooring, frame joists, rafters, roofing, were all as blocks to the ingenious babe. "That airy 'built in a day' blast of the 'ad' is in reality being sounded!"

commented the much pleased professor. "Beatty, you're a wonder!"

Promptly at noon the two would drop tools and lunch genially together under the trees or in a nook of the outlined structure. A distant whistle was sentry to the hour. Also, the 11:59, pausing, as in a bantering spirit of sarcasm, for scarce the fraction of a moment, at the sleepy little Salmon Lake station, was more dependable than watches.

These were the mellowing minutes that knit in an odd accord the professor and W. J. Beatty, carpenter. The yellow, volatile, worldly-wise Pontiac would watch them attentively, applauding alike, with bushy tail, the joke and the adage; his reward being well-merited scraps of sandwiches and crisp, round cakes, to which latter the man of brain was partial. Never tired was Beatty of more than liberally hinting at the peculiar brightness of his pet, and at times a chord of feeling would quaver deep in his throat as he related local persecutions. Even the tin-can-to-tail barbarism, it was shown, was not yet obsolete in these village byways. A draught of cool spring water, from a collapsible cup, always would refreshingly end this social half-hour, for Beatty would delay no longer; all impatient was he to be up and at the task. The professor marveled, but chuckled.

Was it that same dry, scholastic chuckle that ruffled the equanimity of Fortune? The inevitable hitch came. The adjustment and fitting of window-sashes was a network of perplexities and troubles. The front door was illy hung, and the edge was grossly butchered by a too-rash planing for retrieval. The weather turned drizzly and gray, with a persistent bitter wind from the north. Muffled curses drifted to the professor as he sorted boards for his temperamental carpenter. Furthermore, at indecent intervals, midst the havoc of draughts, a crashing of window panes enlivened and made memorable that dreary afternoon. All was more or less carelessly disguised botch or frankly plain bungle. Then came the discovery of a shortage of hardware. Off to the village store, through sleet and mud, went the professor, finding in this three-mile tramp, chill and biting though it was, the distinct period of relief in a sullen and ominous day.

Next morning Beatty figured out for the professor, on a smooth, fair strip of siding, an estimate for "extra" lumber needed for the house and for the building of an eight-by-ten foot shed. The latter clutched for breath; then regaining power of lung, petulantly endorsed the vastness of the heavens. Well he might; for almost to a third of the sum total of cost of material for his modest little "bower" came this blowzy and unproportional afterclap. Beatty was all sympathy. It was indeed preposterous, this sum total—a monstrous outrage—an insult alike to the professorial intelligence and to the layman's—a gross and obvious distortment of natural values. But still—here were the figures. They could not well prevaricate, could they? The basis of it all was the Lumber Trust. Hadn't the professor heard of the advance in the pernicious price-list last fall, and of the further nimble jump all along the line, from shingles to sills? Indignant as the carpenter was, it was plain that his good-nature had returned over night. A magnetic smile broke and broadened sunnily, and his pencil, lightly waved, was a baton to lead off the suspended orchestra of labor.

"That's the main point," mused Professor Jarvis, seating himself resignedly on the doorsill of his three-quarters-accomplished dwelling; "get it done; at all cost, get it done!"

So Beatty was given the commission, and the needed material was ordered by 'phone from a neighboring farmhouse. "I'll pay up for it now," generously exclaimed the professor, foreseeing additional stimulus in the sight and feeling of crisp greenbacks. He opened a large crinkled black leather pocketbook and freely but carefully counted out the bills. The eyes of his carpenter drooped in conventional and becoming modesty, but the money was taken frankly enough, with a furtive figure of language: "It's half-a dozen one way and six the other."

None of the villagers made even a polite pretence of being astonished next day, at a dolorous tale of abandonment and breach of contract. True, the omnivorous rural ear was readily lent in the post-office-general-store-barber-shop-laundry-branch-and-what-not; but attention at keenest was perfunctory, with relieved reversions to the topic of weather. A few courteous souls sauntered so far into boredom as to congratulate the professor on not yet having settled in full the wage score with his carpenter.

"He'll be back for the bucks, all right, all right," prophesied Tom Runkle, the easy-going barber; "and he'll do up the work, too, will Beatty—in his own good time and slapdash, makeshift fashion."

But is was billboard evident that this plaint was more than a twice-told tale. Old Hiram White, indeed, never lifted eyes from the *Salmon Lake Star*. "Oh, Beatty!" was all he gently ejaculated, and he shifted an indifferent ear.

Bruce Hinkleburg, the young doctor, smiled reminiscently. "He started a garage once for this dear, blue, accursed devil of mine!" he called from the pavement, mopping a grimed brow.

"He nearly painted a house for me," volunteered another, nonchalantly. And so it went.

In a few illuminant minutes the professor had gathered that his minus one of the chips and shavings was also a paper hanger, a machinist, a tinner, a gas fitter, an electrician, a blacksmith, a well digger, a rubber worker, a cooper, a chauffeur, and a freight engineer.

"Oh, yes, Beatty can do everything!" chirped little Sammy Esentrot, frankly voicing the thought of a perk-eared ring of admirative juvenility.

The professor was becoming case-hardened. It did not greatly amaze him to hear that Beatty's crowning ambition was to go into vaudeville. Said the boyish editor of the *Star*, casting the eye of approval at old Hiram, "I remember, once he brought to me the opening sentimental lines of a song called 'The Only Little Girl,' and really, it was fair sort of 'dope' as far as it went, but—"

"It didn't go far," tendered the professor, wearily.

"Correct, my friend. There was just a verse and a half of it, and it never was finished."

Before night, it came authentically to ear, that Carpenter Beatty had contracted to paint a house and barn, and a store, over in Duck Cove, and had already briskly begun the new labor. "Working like a very Indian," paradoxically added the grinning newsbringer.

That settled it. Back to his lumber pile trudged the disillusioned professor. He now held the key to much mysterious ciphering. So, then, this bit of arithmetic on the shingles, when given the market quotation on boiled linseed oil, was etched as against "daylight and champaign!" and yon smeared network of figures on the unpainted door-panel? M-m-m! Yes, truly, this was capped with the price of white lead! And these scribblings on plasterboard—enough! Why pile evidence? Plain it was that Jack-of-all-trades had not vamoosed under the hot and goading spur of a moment's impulsion.

The wide calm and piny fragrance of the evening, however, were not to be resisted. The happy little lake was music to encircle and foil a vanguard from any savage breast. A cot, an oil stove, and a few simple articles of furniture had arriyed from the village with the last of his lumber, and after arranging these as orderly as was becoming in a makeshift encampment, the professor strolled, moodily but insensibly mellowing, down to the shore. Where a spring trickled thinly between rocks into a natural trough, he filled his water-bucket, then relaxed where he could lazily command lights and shadows—the flow, blend, intermediate play—in short, the sunset.

Thus engaged, there came to him a splashing among the reeds, and presently emerged the wet-coated Pontiac, nosing along the hummocks and shaking himself vigorously. Here certainly was a friend. The professor was about to "Hi, Ponty!" when he caught the flutter of a bright-blue dress, and a figure, lithe and young,

darted to the uncouth animal, and arms of a witching suppleness were wrapped unceremoniously around the tawny, shaggy neck. Sobbing—no mistake; then, down the breeze, and like the spirit-voice of it, a distinct, "Oh, Beatty! Beatty!"

"By the Dæmon of Socrates!" ejaculated the professor, "here's another bit of Beatty's unfinished work!"

Guardedly he coughed. The blonde head bobbed on the instant, but behind fading flush of cheek and brow lay no confusion, or even annoyance; the long, delicately-curved eyelashes, tear-stained though they were, canopied a friendly and half-amused light. A recognizant moment, tense and silent, had acted the magician.

"Oh, I know of your worries, Professor, and perhaps you have guessed mine."

"Miss Esentrot, I believe—Flossie?"

"Yes. Did the lumber come? Beatty ordered it, you know, from our house."

"Yes, my lumber came all right, being material; but that scamp of a carpenter, being human—where is he?"

"Truly; being human—and Beatty—where is he?"

"Do you advise mere drawing and quartering, Miss Esentrot, or shall I freeze him to the marrow-bone with cool hauteur?"

"Neither, Professor; you must treat him as you do the sun, the wind, the wave. Take him as he is and must be; he's Beatty!"

A tremble was in the voice. The professor leaped into the breach. He had lurked and loitered for it from the start.

"As you do! You know him—and take him as he is!"

"Yes!" The girl held up a diamonded finger.

"Indeed—so far!" exclaimed the professor. "Yet what does it signify—being from Beatty?"

"Nothing!" agreed Flossie; then, reminiscently: "There's been Mary, Barbara, Cecilia, Helen, Georgia, Doris, Elizabeth, Isabelle and Kate, to my poor, certain, present indifferent knowledge; who besides, the Lord knows!"

"But—ah, well! and oh, hades!—why?—Why the—"

"Haven't I told you—he's Beatty?" The deep blue eyes sparkled, then narrowed. "And none of them count, Professor; all straw-girls—not one *knew* Beatty; *we* know him!"

"Perhaps," mused the professor, dubiously. "Well, for an initiatory illustrative lesson, Miss Flossie, how's this? I was informed this afternoon, in Peterson's, that a boathouse had been planned by a set of young city fellows and work will begin as soon as may be. Even now they are scouring the fields for labor. Soon, glancing upward, they'll light upon Beatty, poised like a young god, between heaven and earth. The dripping, slapdash paintbrush will slip glibly to sod—will it not, Miss Flossie? And anon these woods will ring with the recovered music of saw and hammer—but not for me—no!"

The girl was radiant.

"Proof enough, Professor! We know our Beatty!"

The frank enthusiasm of his audience was catching. Almost back to the sophomoric slipped the professor.

"But how about our Beatty?"

"Oh, if—"

"Not at his own game, Miss Flossie; that, I'll allow, lies beyond Hercules; but we must contrive to get him on the hip somehow—and soon. This much looms plain, always: First, he must supplement and ratify your tiny pathetic diamond with the simpler coil of convention—you catch me? Second, he must complete my little cottage. Properly placed, are they not, Miss Flossie? One naturally would follow the other?"

"Surely, Professor! The honeymoon train will wait—my heart's word on that. It's a bargain!"

A quizzical look swept over and rejuvenated the middle-aged face of the arch-plotter.

"One might think, fellow conspirator, and be pardoned for the erroneous thought, that we had succeeded in an admirable tangling of snarled lines."

"Yes, and suppose I were that one?"

"I refuse to suppose it, Miss Flossie. Two troubles make a bubble, you know; and a bubble is the sport of the wind."

The professor's raillery found a worthy teammate.

"Your logic, sir, is convincing. But a sign is in order—is it not—for augury of the event? To be strictly proper, shouldn't there be an Omen?"

"Well thought out, sibyl! Here, Ponty! That's a dog. You shall act in one the Athenian Owl and the Roman Eagle for us, Ponty. Chevalier Miss Esentrot to the home gate, and the battle royal is ours; dog me, if you dare, you mongrel, and all's lost!"

Hands were clasped and shaken, however, with a firm fervor that gave the light words allowance. On the roadway, vivid with the budding hawthorns, they parted—and Pontiac darted ahead of the girl, keen on a scent.

"All's well, you see!" called the professor, half-turning. Then, slowly: "And must it always be Beatty, Miss Flossie?"

"Beatty, always!"

"To know one's own mind is by no means a cheap or a common attribute," soliloquized the bookman, dryly, as he sauntered back to the cottage, switching verdure here and there, for emphasis (a bit unproportionate it might have seemed) to his trite and passing commentary.

The campcot-and-oilstove regime was heroically endured. Desultory carpenter work followed, but the professor did not push matters. Afternoons were given to fishing from a small canoe, or were even more leisurely passed in musing or reading under the oaks and elms. "Beatty's engaged for the job; let Beatty do it!" was the day's matins and vespers.

Well it was that the professor, like most great men, left a wide and unannotated margin for the workings of the twin-gods of Luck. Under the racing light clouds of the third afternoon following the "compact" with Miss Esentrot, he was canoeing down the shelvy shore of the lake to reconnoiter, as was now his frequent custom, the site for the proposed new boathouse, when the puffings of a detested motorcycle—how he hated the pert, I'm coming-clear-the-track-for-me bravado of it!—drew his glance to the narrow cliff-road, winding white and brown, sheer but not high, above the beach. No mistaking the clear-cut Celtic profile of this devil-straddling man; 'twas he—the kernel and cud of his thoughts!

The roving eye of Beatty already had noted him. There was a blithe gesture from the cycle, which was courteously acknowledged by poised paddle. Almost on the movement, the professor chilled.

"Look out! look out!" he shouted.

Not too promptly was the warning volleyed. The little sun-bonneted child, hooded from all but a new world of wild-flowers, was not to be signaled from the track. Beatty did not hesitate. He swerved, with instant decision; and safely enough, so it seemed to the observer below, he was tearing through the cresting gravel of the embankment, when suddenly there was a crumbling, and into the lake shot man and machine. Fortunately for Beatty, he was hurled clear of his wreckage.

A few swift, deft dips of paddle, and the spluttering struggler was collared.

"Hurt, Beatty?"

"No! but—" came gaspings and a frantic swirling of arms.

"So—not of the amphibia! How odd!" was the dry and cruel comment. But anxious line and lights had lifted from the Roman features and an honest relief lay plain. The grip loosened.

"Wha-a-a-t!" sputtered the surprised Beatty. There was a futile, furious, clumsy splashing, and he dipped frothily under. That gaunt and iron arm, however, was ready for him on the rebound. The little boat tossed tipsily.

"Man! get me out of this—and I'll finish it!"

"Finish what?" inquired the professor, curiously.

"House,—what else?"

"Oh, that doesn't matter, Beatty; forget it. Hold still, now, or down you'll go. Beatty, you're a hero—but I certainly am wroth."

"I know, everyone herearound tips me that same spiel."

"Stow the house, Beatty. But, truly, I'm wounded at this last neglect. Why am I not invited to the wedding?"

"Wedding? Wha-a-t in—"

"Your's—and Miss Flossie's."

"Well, of all—"

A careless relaxing of fingers was here manifest—perhaps for that firmer reclutch which clamped at the unexpectedly cheerful: "All right, Professor; you're invited."

"Quite as it should be, Beatty—though an eleventh hour invite, if ever there was one; but I'm not of the ultra-sensitive. I need not remind you, Beatty, that the gay little event happens this eve at 8.30, in Farmer Esentrot's front parlor?"

"A man isn't likely to forget his wedding-date," snapped Beatty.

The canoe had now drifted down the wind to some little distance from shore. Lying almost prone and catching his man firmly, the professor analyzed the situation, and, well satisfied, let the waves work their will. The paddle was lost, and water slopped freely aboard, but inevitably they were destined to beach on a little shrubbed promontory, matched to a sapling for this toy lake.

A few fishers and strollers (plain time killers) from the unpretentious but happily-conducted Wren's Nest, were banding their forceless forces here, shooting the usual heroic directions, and allowing matters and moments to drift. The professor with his gripping burden desired nothing more of them. Presently Beatty grounded. His "All right, now!" was welcomed by the strained arm.

A ready line of brawn now flashed from the group of embryo heroes.

"No case, this, for the pulmotor, friends," remarked the professor genially, amid congratulations. "Just a casual encounter and confidential greeting of Titans. Ah, here's more luck!"—spying little Sammy Esentrot. Two brief notes were promptly scrawled in pencil and a bounding, silver-jingling messenger dispatched.

"Now, Beatty, we'll see what's left of the cycle, before we join the Esentrots for supper. And you certainly need a shift of raiment! Why, yes, you can crawl into a suit of mine, turning up coat sleeves and trousers a trifle. How fortunate, Beatty; —over at the cottage lies a certain dusty suitcase containing what our foremost and still unhackneyed society writers choose to call 'the conventional black'!"

At Peterson's next morning, the name of Beatty, so lately slumped, commanded again the par of pricked-eared attention on the conversational exchange. Even Old Hiram laid aside his *Star* for this latest pert and uninked item of village news. Spread as it might, conjecture bumped blank walls. Beatty, the uncapturable, captured,—and by little Flossie of the Esentrots! Unbelievable! The young editor rubbed hands gleefully as he anticipated Friday's issue and a front-page article, politely sardonic, under the caption, "A Life Contract," suggested perhaps by Bruce Hinkleburg's remark that this mysterious bolting into matrimony might have been a sudden and desperate subterfuge to escape the fulfilment of the boathouse obligation contracted in the antique mist of yesterday.

So colloquy buzzed in the village. But what train-length of packed surprises might equal the professor's overpowering solitary one, when W. J. Beatty, carpenter, appeared on his partial-threshold that morning, shortly before eight, and announced that work must proceed!

"But," cried the astonished man, "but, consider, Beatty, you're now of the order of St. Benedict; off you must pack instanter on the bridal tour, in obedient pursuance of honeymoon laws. Besides, there's the painting at Duck Cove; also your contract on the boathouse."

"Oh, don't worry, Professor," responded Beatty; "boathouses and honeymoons will get their innings. It's six one way and half-a-dozen the other."

"Good-humor is certainly a valuable asset," commented the professor, audibly reflective. "Well, Beatty, what next?"

"We'll put in the porch pillars," said Beatty.

WARDENS OF THE CHAPARRAL

BY ROY LYNDON SHARPE

Out in the chaparral an unusual power watched over Mug Slaughter, aiding and abetting him in his high crimes and misdemeanors and keeping him out of the clutches of the police.

MUG Slaughter was booked again for misdemeanor. How many times his name had been entered under that category on the blotter at the central station no one in the department could have told without consulting the records. A predilection for burning liquids had marked him with a lurid bulb of a nose and drooping purple pouches beneath the eyes, and his frequent offenses against the statutes, made and provided, had fired a majority of the down-town squad with a consuming eagerness to "send him across." But invariably his trespasses had fallen just short of the laws defining felony.

Slaughter was classified by the police as a mild, mournful sort of knave, who, at gaining a livelihood without severe physical endeavor, exhibited a facility that was almost the equivalent of a fine art. It had been the observation that he held two dominant aversions—unusual hazard and honest toil. Often he had been seen teetering at the vital line, to cross which he would have been yielding himself up to his traditional enemy, and always some dispensation had intervened to save him.

The Chief was petulant that morning at sight of Slaughter. "Put him on the chain-gang; make him feed the concrete mixer till his tongue hangs out a foot," he decreed. "Prod him for a couple of days; after that don't watch him too closely, understand? Show the old chronic what our medicine is like; then any member of this department who prevents his escape will be given a beat so far out in the suburbs that he never will see the bright lights again."

The Chief's formula attained its object, for Slaughter could not endure the blistered palms, aching spine and cramped limbs that seized him before the close of his first day with a shovel. Watching his opportunity the second day, he eluded the guard and took to the hills back of the city, where for several hours he sought comfort and concealment in the chaparral. Then spurred on by a high-grade thirst, he made his way through the undergrowth, by a devious route as remote from the public thoroughfare as the topography of region would permit, to the Arroyo Tavern, on the Temple Canyon road, where the proprietor, Shot Flattery, a companion and partner of Slaughter's former years, grudgingly granted him sanctuary.

"If you're going to put up here you'll have to bring something into camp besides a hold-over," followed Flattery's salutation. It was plain that he was slightly embarrassed. "But don't pull off anything too near here—and keep that face of gloom in the background. If it ever got out in front it would put the jinx on the dump."

Slaughter, dejected, marveled inwardly at the changes that prosperity had wrought in the manner of his old friend. Then he inventoried the tavern and its environs—a place to eat and sleep and drink; steep slopes and sharp ravines overgrown with laurel, chaparral and manzanita, where a man desiring to avoid publicity could curl himself up in complacent security and tell the law's inquisitive minions to go hang. In the absence of a more promising alternative he accepted the programme, meanwhile considering the most effective plan of procedure against the convenient flocks and gardens, a mental operation that comprehended Martin Silent's poultry

plant, which he had reconnoitered subconsciously from a distance on the outward journey that day.

A few nights later, Silent was stirred by a signal of manifest distress from the direction of his poultry-houses—a high-keyed staccato medley with an accompaniment of flapping wings. In his slippers and bathrobe he sprinted along the row of enclosures until he located the point of the alarm, forced the gate, threw open the door and flashed a light. He had a glimpse of two small furry creatures that almost brushed his unclad calves as they lumbered over the sill, slid under the fence and trotted leisurely up the slope into the chaparral.

The earthen floor of the shed was littered with feathers, and four of Silent's choicest broilers lay in one corner, in their last flutter. Fresh earth from a narrow excavation under the sill of the house and a similar trench under the surrounding wire-net fence explained how the animals had entered.

"The impertinent burrowing beggars were about as large as poodles, with black-and-white stripes and bushy tails," was the description that Sam Lurch received the next day from Silent, who wore a harried air.

"Foxes, chaparral foxes," Lurch pronounced. "Black with white stripes and plumy tails; usually come at night; partial to young chickens." Lurch, farm advisor for that portion of the county, was accustomed to hearing from Silent the tribulations of a man new to the problems of the poultry-raising industry, and occasionally the young expert was tempted to make entertainment of the occasion. "Good thing you didn't get rough with them, for a chaparral fox has a bad breath when he's mad or excited."

"Really? How is one to keep the blackguards away?"

"Put cans on them. No, I'm not chaffing. Open a few tomato cans, not by cutting in a circle around the top, but by gashing with a knife from the center of the top radially. Push the points of tin inward far enough to leave an opening almost large enough for the extended fingers of one hand. Bait the cans with bacon rinds and place them where the foxes come at night. They'll poke their noses in for the bacon and the sharp points will grip their necks. Naturally the harder they pull back the more firmly the points will plant themselves. Unable to see with the cans over their heads, your foxes will wander aimlessly away and get lost."

To Martin Silent, over from England less than two years, his new surroundings, and the poultry business in particular, presented many things mysterious and novel. Lurch's identification and recommendation in this emergency were no more extraordinary than they had been when the Silent fowls had shown symptoms of attacks successively by hawks, rats, bobcats, mites, roup, gapes and other units in that numerous host that preys upon the feathered family, and when later in the day he started upon his return to Temple Canyon, the poultry man had in his wagon an assorted lot of goods in tins and a can-opener. That night his lacerated fingers and a half-dozen open cans, baited and disposed about the yard, told of the diligence with which he had followed instructions, although the prowlers did not reappear that night, nor for many nights following.

"Always some ripping new pest to look out for," Silent complained to Lurch three months later, after finding where an unexpected toll had been taken from his White Leghorns. "A blooming chick appears to have more enemies than an infant, but fortunately, by this time, I know the worst of them." Which merely serves to illustrate the innocence of Mr. Silent, for Mug Slaughter, in the course of three months, had levied against the flourishing colonies in Temple Canyon more disastrously than all the hawks, bobcats, foxes and maladies combined, yet Silent was wholly and serenely unaware of Mug Slaughter's existence.

Wild creatures of the chaparral found the heavy undergrowth, where it terminated abruptly a few yards up the slope from Silent's plant, an ideal cover from which to train longing, furtive eyes across the narrow intervening strip of meadow-

land upon the tempting fryers that were taking on plumpness in the woven-wire enclosures below. Similarly, Slaughter discovered in it a mask well calculated to render his operations safe and not too arduous. When the weather favored, he drowsed in a bower that he had chosen under a live oak, where, through a fringe of thicket, he could command a view of Silent's living-house and the various poultry-yards. He gathered early a working knowledge of the signs that would tell him what was going on, particularly those forecasting the temporary absences of the proprietor.

He preyed upon Silent's chickens with exceeding caution, and always with the consciousness that forcible entry of the poultry-houses constitute a felony. When Silent was away, the chickens he selected were snared by means of a wire loop and deftly removed from their enclosures. Sometimes for three or four days Silent did not leave the place, and Slaughter had recourse then to a deeper strategy that his sluggish brain had evolved.

Often the gates were opened and the chickens ran at large, feeding upon the plant and insect life. When they strayed to his side of the meadow, Slaughter was impressed by the possibilities. At last he had an inspiration—a fishing-hook and line.

He found diversion in the antics of the first chicken that gulped a hook, and under a force that it could not resist, as the line was gathered in, hand-over-hand, felt itself drawn forward with a rush, wings beating a futile protest, mandibles distended grotesquely, unable to issue an effectual outcry, and jerked at length into the concealment of the bushes.

About this performance, there was nothing to attract Silent's attention, so Slaughter was able to abstract the fowls of his choosing so adroitly that their owner did not notice their disappearance, or if he did miss them, he attributed their loss to other marauders.

From time to time, Slaughter also made incursions upon the gardens and orchards in the other direction, and always the fruits of his foraging were served up to motorists and other wayfarers who halted for refreshments at the Arroyo Tavern, whereby Shot Flattery became the chief beneficiary. The arrangement was altogether satisfactory to Slaughter, but it made Flattery uneasy to have his old associate about. Also, a measure of success in business had developed in him an attitude of intolerance towards Slaughter and his frailties, which the landlord of the tavern exhibited with increasing emphasis as the weeks wore on.

"You're making me take too many chances," he finally complained to Slaughter. "Some one will get suspicious, and my joint will be blamed for everything that has ever gone wrong out this way. Why don't you get out of the petty larceny class? Blow a safe or stick somebody up—put your time against something worth while."

"I might go over."

"That isn't what holds you back," Flattery bristled. "You'd rather crawl than work, but let me tell you something: from now on I'll not be your 'fence' for anything but the coin, and I'll give you twenty-four hours to kick in with the first instalment."

Flattery had meant to impose an insurmountable task as a means of getting rid of Slaughter, but at that instant an idea altered his plans. He adopted a conciliatory tone, at the same time producing a bottle and glasses; thus completely disarming the old inebriate, to whom resentment was an unknown and foreign quality.

"Understand how it is, Mug," Flattery purred. "If I don't keep up a certain front here, I'll lose my best trade; besides, I have a couple of partners who make me account for every two-bit piece, so you see I can't run the place the way I'd like to. But I'll tell you how we'll get around that so you can stay on here, keeping out of sight, with a good bed and plenty to eat and drink. Go after the chicken man's coin—he keeps a wad of it in his shanty." And with persuasive eloquence, Flattery outlined a campaign.

While they talked, Lorry Mills was napping at a table in an adjoining room, with only a muslin partition intervening.

An hour later he slipped out at the rear of the tavern and bent impatient steps across the hills toward the central police station in the city, where, by virtue of an inquisitive disposition and a desire to be on terms of amity with the powers, he frequently regaled the Chief with bits of information about the universe.

Reluctantly the Chief adopted the suggestion. "A dozen times in the last year we've been just at the point of catching Mug with the goods," he objected. "I expect he'll find an out at the last minute this time; but we'll give him another run."

That night there were unusual proceedings in the vicinity of Silent's poultry ranch. As the proprietor was eating his late evening meal, his absorption with his table fare kept him from seeing four men on horseback as they crossed the clearing a few hundred yards above the house and pushed their way into the undergrowth back of the hen-houses.

About the same time, five or six small animals, marked from their ears to the tips of their broad tails with parallel bars of black and white, were poking curious noses out of the chaparral, their nostrils contracting and dilating busily under jet beads of eyes. They were in quest of supper, and had picked up the scent of live poultry. When Silent later stepped out in the gathering dusk to close and fasten the chicken-house doors for the night, he discovered one of the animals, which had ventured almost up to one of the sheds and was scampering back. The discovery prompted the poultry man to look about for the cans which he had prepared months before; also to readjust their points and apply fresh bait.

As darkness settled, Mug Slaughter at the Arroyo Tavern bar was shuddering and displaying symptoms of a failing resolution. "This is going to be poor business, breaking into a man's house and robbing him at night; besides, I can't very well do a trick of this kind by myself," he deprecated. And he conjured a score of other arguments against the enterprise, which Flattery answered with more drinks, cajolery, praise, denunciation, and at last a threat of bodily violence.

"Let me put it off till tomorrow night, when I'm sober," Slaughter pleaded.

"You're never sober. You'll get busy tonight. Get his coin. Don't do anything worse than that unless you have to, but if he wakes up mean and starts anything you know what to do."

"Shot, you come along. I'll do the work, but I want you with me."

"And leave this place alone? What are you talking about! Say, if there's any more debate about this, I'm going to heave you out of here on your neck."

Adequately subdued, Slaughter reeled out of the barroom and started for the Silent domicile, taking his position by the sentinel eucalyptus trees against the sky and groping mechanically for the somber trail. As he stumbled along, his eyes more and more adapting themselves to the meager light and making out objects about him, he gained courage. His senses were swimming in an alcoholic fog that blinded him to everything but the task ahead. Abandoned were the fear and dread of penal servitude acquired in the years of living by his wits. For the time he was entirely within the control of Flattery's stronger will, and moved in accord with the latter's sinister suggestions, which were reverberating incessantly in his ears.

Disregarding all the rules of prudence, Slaughter merged noisily from the underbrush directly back of Silent's poultry enclosure, pausing at the edge of the clearing only long enough to tie a handkerchief about the lower part of his face and to observe that there was no light in the bungalow. He halted again at one of the poultry-houses and rocked for a brief interval in its shadow. An open space lay between him and the bungalow. At one hand stood Silent's wagon, near a corral where horses were munching hay. Reassured, he careened across the yard to the house, fumbled at a window, found the sash lifted, the opening screened. He passed around to the front of the house, trying the door, and along the other side. The windows there were all fastened down.

He meditated briefly. In his pocket was a short, blunt instrument with which he

could force any ordinary window or door; also with a knife-blade he could easily cleave his way through the screen, but instinctively, and in spite of his whiskey, he considered the danger of exposing himself before a window. A door would be preferable.

Turning the corner, he lurched aside unsteadily, startled by the scraping sound of metal against the earth. In the darkness he could dimly make out the movement of a small, shadowy object that was executing odd figures about the yard, so near his feet that Slaughter had come within a few inches of treading it down. As he hesitated, a similar rattle of metal reached him from another direction. He peered about uneasily. Twenty or thirty feet farther out in the yard, more plainly to be seen, another creature was moving. An instant later, he discovered a third. He swung about and faced a fourth by the side of the house, near where he had passed. They were on all sides of him; all of them going through fantastic evolutions, alternately advancing and retreating, changing directions abruptly or wheeling in narrow circles, plunging their noses into the turf with a metallic clink at each movement.

Slaughter swayed in his tracks. To his excited vision, the yard was alive with black-and-white creatures. One of them charged him. He kicked out at it desperately. His toe came in clattering contact with a quart-size fruit-can with a driving force that sent the creature spining like a black-and-white pin-wheel. Instantly the atmosphere was charged with a pestilential affluvium, soul-searching in its penetration, staggering in its offensive potency.

"Wow-hoo!" Slaughter started a succession of shrill echoes. Gasping, flinging his arms before him, he bounded through the riot of evil fumes to the wagon, and skidded over the side, grovelling in the bottom of the bed on his stomach.

Hatless, the handkerchief that had been intended for a disguise stripped away and hanging about his throat, blinking violently, his face distorted and working with terror, he was on his knees, clutching the seat of the vehicle, when four men slipped out of the undergrowth and closed in upon him, two of them flashing pocket lamps as they ran.

"What's all this bally noise?" Martin Silent in pajamas emerged from the bungalow and shuffled across the yard.

"S-s-skunks! Hu-hu-hundreds of s-s-skunks! Di-di-digging with ti-tin-horns!" Slaughter chattered. Delirium tremens was gripping him and his voice broke to a piercing falsetto as he wailed: "Keep 'em away! Keep 'em away!"

"Stop that yap and come out of there." A man in a drab suit was climbing into the wagon. In the flash of a pocket-lamp, Slaughter beheld the Chief reaching for him. He straightened himself up with a sudden movement that projected him out of his retreat. He struck across the wagon-tongue, caught one toe in the whiffletrees, the other on the neckyoke, and continued his flight on all fours until he could gather himself.

"Let him go," chanted the Chief, as two of the men moved to head him off. And Slaughter rounded the poultry-sheds at prodigious strides, crashing into the chaparral a moment later.

"I say," Martin Silent began, "we have the beggars canned sure enough."

"What do you mean, canned?" some one asked.

"Don't you see? They tried for the bait, and they can't disengage the cans."

"It's plain you're not aware of all that's been going on around here tonight," a man in drab growled.

"It was Mug, all right, and we almost had him," Lorry Mills volunteered weakly.

The Chief was clinging at a discreet elevation to the side of the wagon, one foot on the brake-beam, grimly observing the diminutive, eery figures of black and white as they waltzed and capered. For an instant he glared ominously across the wagon at Mills, then shook his head.

"Come to think of it, you haven't the head to frame up a thing of this sort. I guess my original surmise holds good—the devil's wardens are still on watch over that old pirate, even out here in the chaparral."

RAM SINGH AND ENGEL SAHIB

BY WILL KENYON

Here are two inseparable truths: A keeper should be judged by the animals he keeps. A man should know better than to poke eternally with a stick at caged beasts that have never known the bromidic influence of peanuts or other narcotics.

THE Lascars were butchering a sheep in the forepeak galley, and the warm scent of fresh blood stirred up pandemonium among the jungle folk in the cages lashed to the deck by the forehatches. The sea was a lake of oil and barren of a ripple, save where the big twin screws threw astern a long lane of swirling, bubbling phosphorescent flame. It was stifling hot—the decks were like hot plates—and there was scarcely enough breeze to blow out a match as I joined Max Schlieman in the bows.

It was Schlieman's business to ransack creation, poking into and out of more out-of-the-way corners of the earth than civilization dreams exist, gathering wild beasts, unheard-of birds known only to Audubon societies, and weird, uncanny "freaks" for American dealers. He was a strange man, a German, with odd tricks of speech and many surprising customs borrowed from Hindoo and Mussulman and the savage of remote hill countries. He was altogether impossible from a civilized standpoint, but his rich and varied experiences dimmed the Arabian Nights for me.

"Good!" said Max, pointing with his pipe to the cages below. "Dose fellows are yelling fine down dere; raw blood brings back dreams of liberty, when they chase and make the kill themselves. Yell and scream, unhappy ones."

As if in answer, the deep-throated roars of Bengal tigers rose in unison with the cat-like shrieks of leopards from the far-off Himalayas; half a thousand of the little monkeys that die of homesickness gibbered obscenely, while a fiendish ourang-outang rattled the grating of his cage and yelled like a soul in torment, until the mighty elephants rocked against their chains and trumpeted in fear. A loathsome hyena laughed as a maniac.

It was a bizarre ensemble we looked down upon in the thick tropical dusk. The lithe, dark-skinned Lascars, naked save for a breech-cloth, grimy with coal dust or glistening with oil from the engines; the huge elephants swaying to and fro in the gloom, the serpent-like trunks ceaselessly winnowing wisps of hay over their broad backs; and the unseen children of forest and jungle voicing their unrest. It was hot beyond belief, and the pace of the ship fouled the air with reek of wild beasts and the smell of the East from the Lascars' foul kennel in the fore-peak.

"Lascars!" grunted Schlieman, gazing enviously at the half-dozen naked forms sprawled in the bows and sleeping peacefully through heat and uproar; "I belief a Lascar could sleep in hell and haf sweet dreams. Ram Singh! Ram Singh *ho!*" he shouted above the din to his native helper, "turn a hose on the *hathis*—elephants—to make them cool. So!"

Gradually the uproar subsided and gave place to the orderly, accustomed noises of the night—the swish of the oily sea on the forefoot, the muffled tramp of the engines, the clanging half hourly note of the ship's bell, and the monotonous foreign chatter of the Lascar crew. I lay watching the heat-lightning play all around the horizon, and must have been drowsing, for Schlieman's voice startled me.

"Last time I bring along some specimens to New York," he said, "our flag was flying at half-mast. You see?—somebody haf died. Is it too hot to listen why that

soul flew away, or will I tell you a tale which only we two know, Ram Singh and I? Listen, then, my friend.

"When I was collecting that time I travel like the Wandering Jew. Got im Himmel! I freeze in the Himalayas, and nearly lose my life falling from the Roof of the World, to get some snow leopards; later I was roast alive in jungles. All in the day's work. For a year I barely existed—I was a pariah dog—and it was good to come to Calcutta again, where I picked up little Ram Singh. Like it? My friend, so soon as I leave the smell of the East behind me at Port Said, I do not live until it is in my nostrils again. Yes; I come back always to answer the call. Europe and America are too sanitary—too clean.

"I loaded my cages and elephants on a German freighter at Calcutta. She looked like Noah's Ark—if you belief that extraordinary cruise—and you would not suspect there was a million dollars in burlap, jute, hides and precious woods under the hatches. I tear my hair when I think of such a trip. It was so hot the decks were like stove-lids; and I sit still and see four tigers, two leopards, a white elephant—a giant tusker—die en route, to say noddings of a hundred monkeys. Monkeys, liddle monkeys, drive me crazy. As ryots die of cholera, so die liddle monkeys of what books call nostalgia; but it is what we know as heimweh—homesickness. It is as deadly as a cobra poison, only slower.

"Der second officer, Engel, was a man with a pig's head. Lombroso would haf called him a mattoid; certainly his brow, chin and ear were unlovely. He was a cruel man; and before I know him three days I see he will make trouble for me and the poor helpless beasts. For hours he loafed by the cages, day and night, poking sticks and laughing, until my beasts get wild, insane rage and yell like demons. Den he would go away laughing—this great black devil, with his enormous misshapen ears of a degenerate. I haf seen him throw his head back and laugh when he succeeds to make a liddle monkey cry like a baby. He was not a man; he was a devil, and I hate him for the black heart in his breast. We haf words, hot, ugly words, when he will not keep away from my beasts.

"One day Ram Singh was cleaning out cages with a great iron poker eight feet long, and he dropped it. Engel was standing behind—Ram Singh could not know—and the poker smashed Engel's great toe. He went white as a bone from pain and anger, and he smote poor Ram Singh to the deck like a bullock under a pole-ax. Herr Gott! I saw that man-beast grin like a great ape and limp away.

"Yet anoder time Engel strike Ram Singh—in front of Rajah's cage. Rajah was a glorious Bengal tiger taken in the Ganges delta; fifteen feet from tip to tip, if you will belief me. Engel was standing there poking, poking, always poking with a long stick. If it was accident, I cannot say for true, but Ram Singh staggered past and spill filthy slops over Engel's fresh white suit; and he look up at him, grinning. Then Engel struck a second time, full on the mouth, and liddle Ram Singh went down like a stone in a well. He lay so close to Rajah's cage the carrion breath was hot in his face, and the big beast roared just like those fellows tonight when they smell sheep's blood, for Ram Singh was all bloody.

"Ram Singh lay there looking death out of his hazel eyes at Engel, who laughs and turns away on his heel before I could kill him. Gott! How mad was I! But Ram Singh spat out t'ree teet', and with the taste of his own blood in his mouth, and the tiger snarling in his ear, he cursed the going of Engel Sahib, who haf done him such a great wrong and made him a laughing-stock among his fellows. Ram Singh called him a swine, a jackal, a dog; he defiled Engel's ancestors and cursed all his womankind for handmaidens of sin. And then, quite slowly, but not speaking clearly for want of his teet', he swore by the Bull, and by God, and even by the Prophet whom he borrowed, that when the tale should be written in full and the scroll rolled up, he, Ram Singh, would smile through the gap in his teet' with his honor whole again.

"So swore Ram Singh. But Engel Sahib was a German pig, and he could not understand; he only laughed. But I —I who know the native as myself—I was afraid for him. And again he only laughed and would not listen. So, like Pilate, I washed my hands and waited.

"One week later, a night like tonight, only darker and hotter, it came. Nobody was moving except that mad Engel, who was teasing my poor Rajah with his long stick, and laughing like the fiend he was. I could hear the big tiger roar and snarl and fight the stick; I say in my heart a prayer for him to come a liddle nearer the cage, just a liddle bit. Did my soul reach out and whisper to Ram Singh? I do not know. Was it a sending? I do not know. But I belief as much as I belief anything, though no man saw, that Ram Singh crept up behind and shoved Engel Sahib against the cage grating. It was done so quick no man could see, no man could help, and Engel went out to his God with a woman's shriek on his coward's lips. Gott! It was terrible. The beasts roared as a thousand jungles, the Lascars whimpered like gibbering baboons, and the officers turned pale and sick at what they saw lying there by Rajah's cage when the lanterns were brought. It was not nice even to see mineself, and I haf looked on death in a thousand shocking forms. You haf seen an orange squeezed dry? Dot was Engel Sahib. And Rajah raged in his cage with the light in his eye that comes from killing, licking his paws and muzzle white again. Ach!

"Next day Engel was sewed up in a piece of sail-cloth, and the *Aurochs* stopped. When her tramping engines ceased running the silence was so great, so impressive, I felt all alone in the vast world; it was as still as the Rest-House of Death. Did you efer feel you was the Last Man? It is not nice. The captain stood by the grating to read a prayer of commitment, and the tears ran down his face. Soon a splash comes in the water, the ship gets under way again, and my world is peopled with sweet noise."

"And Ram Singh? What of him?" I asked.

"My friend, as you know, I did not see —no man saw; wherefore Ram Singh would lie. But I looked deep down in his eyes and said: 'Ram Singh, what happened to Engel Sahib?' And he smiled through the gap in his teeth, for his honor was whole again. 'Heaven born,' said he, 'he was crushed by the tiger and died; the rest is with God.' Which was true—so far as it goes. All the same, it was a big price for Engel Sahib to pay for t'ree teet'."

NEXT month: THE KNAVE OF SPADES *by Frederick J. Jackson,* which relates how the original bad man leads a searching party of one, organized to locate the three knaves missing from the deck.

(*Continued from page 2*)

the story. The delicate irony of the last two paragraphs is very good, as are other similar touches throughout the story.

God's Half Acre is a more ambitious effort than *The Smile of Joss*, but it is not so good technically as that story because of the constantly shifting viewpoint. It is a story in which the reader's sympathy is curiously divided between the two leading characters. The opening plot incident is admirably handled and introduces these two characters in their proper juxtaposition. The hardy manliness of the soldier at work and the careless childishness of the soldier at play, are well contrasted; and the far-reaching influence of the little personal differences is used to good advantage. There is just enough swish of skirts to make one feel the feminine appeal. The story has proportion, atmosphere, easy flowing style, and strong characterization and finally it imparts to the reader a feeling of pathos which alone vindicates the author of any minor faults.

Horror for horror's sake, seems to be the purpose of the story, *The Inevitable*. If art consists in making an unhappy ending, Russian style, because it happens so in life, this story is artistic, but there seems to be no excuse for the implied tragedy at the end. Women have changed their minds ere this, and it is not inevitable for Clare to marry Curly. There is a delicate thread of sympathy woven throughout that makes this a compelling story. The style is direct and sincere, and the characters are more normal if less picturesque than those in some of the other stories. Here, as in the *The Prod*, the writer shows that he knows the value of repression and suggestion rather than overt narrative.

The Strike at Nealy's is chiefly noteworthy for its plot. It is the plot, which is really new or as new as plot can be, that is the sustaining feature of the story. There is no characterization. If there is any moral, it is that of retribution. Nobody deserved anything and nobody got anything.

Without the Law gives the reader a comfortable feeling of the triumph of primitive justice, but the story is marred by the lapsing back from a direct beginning to the reversionary "Almost two years before this little seance." Here is where the omniscient critic feels that he could have done better than the author in respect to preserving one of the sacred "unities," for the thrown-in explanation is too much a part of the tale to be thus used as a sandwich.

The Tenth Contest comprises the stories in this issue, (September); and all lists must be received at the office of THE BLACK CAT, Salem, Mass., before October 1st. Prizes will be awarded October 10th; and the result of the contest will be announced in the December BLACK CAT, issued November 15th.

A PRIZE of $25 will be awarded to the author of the story which is selected as the best story of the month by the largest number of club members.

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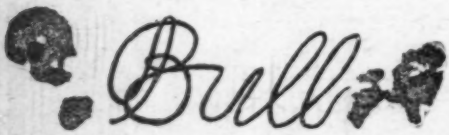

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